

## Audition Process for 2026-27 Blue Key Heads Begins

**JUNIPER KLOCK & SOPHIA TOLOKH**

With the advent of spring comes the auditions for the 2026-2027 Blue Key Heads, offering students an opportunity to embody school spirit and enliven the campus. The current Blue Key Heads hosted a meeting with interested Uppers in Susie's last Friday to explain the audition process and answer questions.

Many students, such as Gabbie Kawooya '27, have looked up to Blue Key Heads as role models and aspire to take on their responsibilities. Kawooya expressed her motivation for auditioning to become a Blue Key Head.

"I've wanted to be a Blue Key Head since my freshman year. I've always found them to be very upbeat, and they always bring sunshine to people's days. Specifically, I enjoy going to sports game [and] supporting teams and all the people who compete for Andover Athletics. As a Blue Key Head, it would be really fulfilling for me to be at the forefront of cultivating the sports community, getting people to come to games, leading orientation, and all these different things

that are about being fun and bringing some brightness to people's days," said Kawooya.

Similarly, Enrique Mercado '27 highlighted how a former Blue Key Head had inspired him to apply for the role.

"[Adaora Mbanefo '24] was [here] my freshman year. I remember talking to her so much about it, and she was genuinely one of those people [who] would always brighten my day, and I feel like she embodied the role of Blue Key Head so well. That inspired me so much," said Mercado.

The Blue Key Head audition traditionally gives applicants ample creative freedom. Kawooya described her initial thoughts going into the process.

"I have a lot of ideas for the audition, and where I'm stuck right now is there's a lot of different little things I want to do and incorporate in. In my years of performing, the one thing I've come to expect is that my best ideas normally come in the moment when I'm in front of the crowd, just doing my thing. I want it to feel pretty natural and not too

*Continued on A5, Column 3*



AUDREY BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN

The 2025-2026 Blue Key Heads explained the audition process to Uppers interested in the position in Susie's last Friday.

## David Siahaan '27 and Minnie Kim '27 Elected 2026-2027 Student Body Co-Presidents



CINDY ZHOU/THE PHILLIPIAN

David Siahaan '27 and Minnie Kim '27 delivered speeches to the student body during the final Co-Presidential Debate.

**ANGELA GUO & STELLA SEONG**

David Siahaan '27 and Minnie Kim '27 were elected to serve as 2026-2027 Student Body Co-Presidents following the final Co-Presidential Debate at All-School Meeting on March 27. Throughout Spring Term and over the summer, 2025-2026 Co-Presidents Gracie Aziabor '26 and Philip Meng '26 will help the pair transition into their roles.

Siahaan and Kim's campaign focused on four initiatives: opt-in formal Community Suppers; a surprise Head of School festival; Community Conversations, a forum for student dialogue with campus adults; and event punch cards. Kim expressed her excitement about starting work on Community Suppers, and Siahaan pointed to the event punch card initiative as especially meaningful to him.

"I really hope that there will be some meaningful change as

quickly as possible. We really hope that [we'll be] seeing that uptick in attendance and uptick in people showing up for each other. What I'm most excited to see is walking into a volleyball game or wrestling meet or a musical and seeing more and more people coming in," said Siahaan.

Students pointed to specific proposals that stood out during the debate. Andrew Ren '28 highlighted Siahaan and Kim's community dinner initiative.

"When Minnie and David announced their idea of the community dinners, it really stood out to me because it was a very different event. I think the idea is really cool, and sitting next to someone new and eating dinner with them would be quite memorable," said Ren.

Several students said the debate clarified the candidates' platforms and, in some cases, influenced their votes. Helen Xiong '29 noted that the questioning segment helped her distinguish between each pair's proposals.

"The debate definitely changed how I perceived both

of the candidate pairs. I think it was pretty productive overall. It answered some questions I had and gave me a better understanding of what the candidate's initiatives were. The best part about the debate was the questioning segment, because the questions asked were really good, they really targeted the other groups. So I was able to see how they could respond under pressure," said Xiong.

Having served as Class Representatives together for the past two years, Kim reflected on the strength of her and Siahaan's partnership and the support they provided each other throughout their campaign.

"There's no one I'd rather have run with, no matter the outcome. I'm just so happy David and I have been able to do this entire process together. We have been so supportive of one another, and I truly am

*Continued on A5, Column 3*

## Spring Wellness Events Boost Student Morale

**JOHN KIM & SIMRAN SHAH**

Students crowded in lines for the ice cream truck parked outside Paresky Commons after last Friday's All-School Meeting (ASM). Setting the tone for the spring term, this event was one of many that week that aimed to improve student wellness and mental health.

Brandon Walton '28 reflected on the ice cream truck. Despite last week not being the first time such events have occurred this year, he described their importance at this time.

"Coming off the winter, moods are really down, and the snow and the weather was really bad. Ice cream was a good idea, and everyone showed up, especially after ASM... This year, our

school spirit has been a little low, and when everyone gets together, events are really helpful for people to socialize with everybody else on campus," said Walton.

The events were made possible by a collaboration between multiple campus partners, including the Sykes Wellness Center (Sykes), the Office of Community and Multicultural Development (CAMD), and the Head of School Office. Amy Patel, Dean of Health and Wellness, explained their planning and success.

"In addition to routine programming, we coordinated with other departments to offer several events during the week and on Friday afternoon. We hoped this would offer opportunities for connection across campus. One event that the Sykes Wellness team held involved bringing a therapy dog to the library. Another involved our school dieti-

tian and wellness programming coordinator offering a mindful activity and healthy snacks in the library. There was a great turnout for both activities," wrote Patel in an email to *The Phillipian*.

Vedant Bajaj '28, who visited the Dean of Students office for snacks, felt that the events served its purpose of improving mental health on campus.

"My friend and I went for 20 minutes after ASM, and we played some Connect Four and ate a lot of munchkins... the school is trying to support the mental health of its students. Obviously, one of the ways they do this is they're hosting good events that can take our minds off of stress, which is why they often involve food and

*Continued on A5, Column 1*



AUDREY BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN

Isabella Tang '28 and other students enjoyed various wellness events last week including free ice cream trucks stationed outside Paresky Commons.

## The STATE OF THE ACADEMY

CXLIX 2026

### SURVEY IS OUT!

#### The Next Chapter: Cluster Co-President Elections Kick Off

**DINA NAMJOO & IAN S. KIM**

Andover's residential clusters have been preparing to start the election process to select Cluster Co-Presidents. Candidate pairs will compete to lead the Abbot (ABB), Flagstaff (FLG), Pine Knoll (PKN), West Quad North (WQN), and West Quad South (WQS) clusters. Cluster Co-Presidents are tasked with organizing events, meetings, and social activities throughout the school year, and serve as a link between students and their respective Deans.

Jill Meyer, Pine Knoll Cluster Dean, noted that implementing student leadership positions ensures cluster-wide events and initiatives are executed in ways that feel relevant and relatable.

"[The Cluster Co-Presidents] are really the pulse of student life in the cluster. They're sharing how students are feeling right now: either morale is really high, 'We loved the munch last week,' or 'It's been raining for five days, and the munch wasn't super well attended.' They're really helpful in figuring out how students are doing, [and] what sort of things they would appreciate right now.

Other elements are things like their participation in the conduct response process... they're really the conduit between the 200 or so kids in the cluster and the cluster," said Meyer.

Serving as Cluster Co-Presidents requires pairs to formulate original initiatives to enhance student life. Pine Knoll Cluster Co-President candidate Genie Han '27, running with Tomas Tejapaibul '27, highlighted Pine Knoll's appeal and some of the initiatives the pair is pursuing.

"The Knoll is such an underrated cluster on campus. We're right by the Sanctuary. We have so much nature surrounding us. And we're also just far enough away from campus that it feels like we're living away from it, but close enough that it's convenient. And I think truly it's the people in Pine Knoll who have made my Pine Knoll experience what it is... We want to have further community bonding as a core theme. Then, we want to raise awareness about our surroundings, so not just our community, but society on a broader

*Continued on A5, Column 1*

Commentary, A2

#### "Beyond the Likely Answer"

Adopting AI at Andover needs constant vigilance against convergence of diversity

Eighth Page, A8

#### April Fool's!

What a packed week full of articles.

Sports, B1

#### Ten in a Row

Boys Swimming and Diving won its tenth NEPSAC Division 1 title in ten years

Arts, B8

#### Polished Beat and Careful Moves

Explore a review on Harry Styles' disco-inspired fourth album that delivers sleek production and danceable rhythms.

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Editorial

# Urgent Message

We know that you want your voice heard. So, fill out the State of the Academy (SOTA) survey. We are here to stifle any rebuttals you might have.

**“We don’t have enough time.”**

Andover students are busy. We acknowledge that the survey will take your time, but only about *twenty minutes* of it (or even fifteen minutes depending on how quickly you click)! We encourage you to fill it out with friends, and turn it into something fun. You may learn things about one another.

**“We’re going to get tracked.”**

The SOTA is 100% anonymous. Pinky promise.

**“Who cares?”**

Many students may believe that the SOTA is not impactful. Why spend twenty minutes of your time if your data is going nowhere? Yet, SOTA data has a larger influence on your Andover experience than you may realize.

Faculty and administration regularly look to SOTA data when making decisions about programs, policies, and initiatives. This data is one of the few structured ways wider student perspectives can formally enter such conversations. Past responses have helped guide initiatives at places like the Brace Center, informed the design of new student programs, and supported applications for your fellow students’ Abbot Grants that fund new opportunities on campus. Every year, new questions are added and modified to make sure that they address concerns that are actually relevant to you. This

time around, we’ve asked questions about the recent cell phone policy, perceptions of grading standards, the effectiveness of task forces, and thoughts on having student voices in the Head of School search.

Moreover, participation itself matters. Higher SOTA participation demonstrates that our student body cares about having its voice heard, and makes it harder for our voices to be overlooked. The more people participate, the more compelling the data is.

To the 25.8% of you who passed on the SOTA last year, if you are still at this school, this is your chance to turn over a new leaf. The other 74.2% of you who filled out the SOTA, you have our deep gratitude. Thank you all.

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

# The Phillipian

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Phillips Academy

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# Why Figure Skating Deserves Your Year-Round Attention

**MEDHA KONDA & MARI UCHINO-GARCIA**



A. LEE / THE PHILLIPIAN



C. ZHOU / THE PHILLIPIAN



CAMILA CHEN / THE PHILLIPIAN

Anyone with even a remote social media presence caught moments from the 2026 Winter Olympics and perhaps figure skater Alysa Liu’s confident moves to “Stateside” by PinkPantheress and Zara Larsson. Maybe you’ve heard of the showstopping, self-named “Quad-God” Ilia Malinin, who tumbled to eighth place as the favorite to win gold. For many, the Olympics seem like a defining competition for an athlete’s career. Yet, figure skating goes beyond a four-year watch cycle. At the World Championships last weekend, the Men’s and Women’s singles short and free programs were wrought with emotion and challenges, but not without deserving medalists on both sides. As the championship far surpassed the Olympics in terms of consistency and passion, we prompt the so-called “four-year fans” to consider the end of the season as a chance to dive into the art of skating. Moments from this weekend in Prague leave much to watch for in the 2026-2027 singles skating season: there isn’t

a better time for you, the casual couch potato, to tune in all year long.

The joy of figure skating is in the balance of athleticism and artistry; no better seen than in the Men’s programs. For this reason, watching the sport is appealing to all types of people. In this season, American skater Ilia Malinin has certainly imprinted himself onto the sport: landing the first quadruple axel, breaking the free skate record 3 times, and most recently winning the World Championships for the third time. He displays such undoubted technical prowess; the sheer base value of his quad jumps skewed the playing field for other talented skaters, making him reach intense fame online. If speed and power aren’t your style, regarded as his closest competitor is Yuma Kagiyama of Japan, whose expression and interpretation brought the audience to tears in a skate last weekend. His performance allows fans to appreciate musicality, along with his infectious joy that lights the audience on fire. The upcoming season is quite possibly the most ideal time to invest yourself in skating, as these two and others continue to hone their skills, the debate of technicality versus perfor-

mance draws closer. Its versatility implores exploration of skating beyond the Olympics, so why only watch once every four years? Even more so does the sport hit close to the Andover community, members of which have accomplished much in skating themselves. Supporting the sport can also support our Andover community, as we learn more about the talent at

**Being a sport that isn’t offered at Andover, it’s something to enjoy from an outside perspective.**

our own school.

If you’ve never been the most sports-inclined person, skating itself doesn’t stop at high-speed spins and elegant step sequences. Perhaps the most surface-level, but not unimportant aspect of the season’s start is the range of costumes. This year, we’ve witnessed refined tuxedos like in Stephen Gogolev’s “bank robbery,” a Kung-Fu Panda suit from Olympic gold-medalist Mikhail Shaidorov, and a bittersweet goodbye with *La Vie en rose* from Kaori Sakamoto. Skaters find a way to

bring their personality into the costumes they wear, and they play a big part in the story that the performer wants to create. Figure skating isn’t just a competition, but rather a show, and if unique looks are your thing, then the sport will certainly appeal to you. In Shun Sato’s free skate to “The Firebird Suite” by Igor Stravinsky, he perfectly embodies the music’s meaning in his costume with sparkling red and gold embellishments. The piece tells a story surrounding a prince who captures the elusive firebird, and it’s thoroughly told through both his heroic movements, but certainly his costume. Getting to watch these programs unfold is a time to escape from day-to-day tasks and take a step back from school. Being a sport that isn’t offered at Andover, it’s something to enjoy from an outside perspective; it’s easy to develop an affinity for a skater and enjoy cheering them on with your friends when they compete. So take that Saturday night in, grab a friend, some snacks, and enjoy the skating, costumes, music—whatever reason it appeals to you.

The skating season spends a good amount of time in the cold, sometimes dreary winter that we experience. But

the time spent talking about your favorite skater or crashing out about unfair judging is quite the opposite. The experience of watching skaters reach their best or having a rougher day skating is an experience better felt with a friend. Our dorm-mates have likely heard many cheers of excitement and cries of despair from the TV downstairs throughout the winter term. The skating season bonded us with friends as the waves of emotions hit us. Sharing love for the sport became sending friends videos, hanging out more often, and of course, catching our favorite competitions on Friday nights. Figure skating has helped us get closer to our friends and destress in a fun and exciting way.

As the 2025-2026 season comes to a close, we fans have seen a variety of skaters show their highs and lows. The various shocks through the season tested many’s resilience and determination. We bid farewell to the well-loved athletes, and simultaneously welcome the next generation of skaters making their debut amid a future of many possibilities. Which is to say there is no better time than the present to follow the sport a little closer. There’s no shame in watching the sport without being a skater yourself, either; perhaps you’ll find a new hobby to pick up along the way. Take the sport as a way to disconnect from school life and simply relax with the beautiful programs— or maybe even cheer on members of the Andover community as they compete. Though the excitement from the Olympics has surely slowed, those who were entranced by the competition shouldn’t stop now—the next season is already in the works, and these talented athletes need viewers.

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**CORRECTIONS:**  
Katie Porter should be listed as class of 1992 in last week’s editorial, “Who Run the World...”  
The Phillipian regrets these errors.

# I'm Losing Myself. Aren't You?

SIMRAN SHAH



COURTESY OF SIMRAN SHAH

Every high school student practices the traditional ritual of icebreakers at least once in their life. While they might seem trivial, those precarious moments at the start of each school year can make one feel that their one-sentence answer defines their identity, and in a way, it does. The icebreakers are asked to give each student an opportunity to introduce themselves, and for Andover students, that means to make an impression. The most common one is some variation of “What is your favorite hobby?” or “What do you like to do in your spare time?” As you can imagine, Andover students have a field day with that one. Some draw up a college essay worthy answer, and others attempt to be more subtle but with just as much overthinking. While I’ve been a victim of it myself, at the start of my first year at Andover this year, I stuck to “I like to read.” It seemed modest, but it was also true. At that time, I read a lot... like all the time—I even wrote my application essay about how much I like to read. Usually, the follow-up question to my saying this is “What type of books do you like to read?” to which I can answer with, “Everything.” However, this all changed once I arrived in Andover. Suddenly, I had too much homework and too many commitments to read. When I did have spare time, I simply had no brainpower to read and turned to less complex options like sleeping, scrolling, or watching

shows and movies. The more I asked my friends, the more they seemed to agree. There was no time for creative hobbies. For so long, teenagers have defined themselves by the activities they partake in. What happens when those activities are deemed sacrificial to the structure of the rigorous schedule of an Andover student’s life? At the time, “I like to read” seemed like the obvious answer. Now, describing myself feels dishonest.

When I arrived at Andover to move in, my mom took me to Andover Bookstore, a gem downtown and part of what made me fall in love with our campus on my tour day. She gifted me several books, including some I had brought with me, and I knew I had enough to last me through Family Weekend. However, I didn’t read a single page. As academic and social engagements ramped up, I ended up exhausted by the time I returned to the dorm. As someone who had never been able to nap before, I suddenly relied on them to survive the week. One thing I’ve learned is that social structures tend to shape individual behavior, and nowhere else is that more obvious. Clearly, the high-pressure environment of Andover caused this separation from my favorite hobby.

Soon, I realized this was a collective pattern. My roommate and I created a book club after we bonded over not having read much all year, despite being avid readers. I told my house

## If our hobbies are what make us unique, who do we become when they disappear?

counselor about my concerns with reading, and she ominously replied: “You’re not the only one.” I even realized that though I love writing, I never write for myself anymore. I haven’t performed at all, when dance and vocal recitals and musical theatre productions had been an



SOPHIA KIM / THE PHILLIPIAN

integral part of my life at home. I yearned for this person I once was, but now can’t recognize in the mirror. I’ve learned that Andover, although it prides itself on diversity and equity, has its own version of hierarchy. Certain aspects of identity are valued, like achievement, leadership, and academic or athletic excellence, and others are quietly pushed aside, like unstructured creativity. Slowly, our hobbies are becoming sacrificial offerings to our schedules.

Now, we see students attached to their dorms and activities that, in excess, can lead to procrastination of both schoolwork and creative pursuits. However, our bodies need to utilize our free time in this way to recover from our hectic lives. We’ve adapted to the demands of our high-pressure environment, to prioritize rest over

exploration, and understandably so. This, however, raises the question: if our hobbies are what make us unique, who do we become when they disappear?

My concern is that our community will become a boring mass of uniformity, like some of those suburban neighborhoods where each house is built simply following the blueprint of the one built before. The diversity of interests our school prides itself on will disappear because the pursuit of varied interests decreases. Instead of being defined as readers, artists, and musicians, we’ve moved to chasing the Co-President of whichever club and first chair of whichever music ensemble. Our identities have shifted towards performance, productivity, and outcome, away from passion, to the point that doing something

“for fun” doesn’t exist anymore.

When hobbies disappear, we lose more than activities. We risk our creativity, our curiosity, and parts of our identity that existed before academic burdens shaped us. If I were asked again, “What do you like to do in your spare time?” I wouldn’t quite know what to say. The answer seems more complex, not because I’ve stopped loving reading, writing, and performing, but because my environment leaves little space for them. If icebreakers are supposed to reveal our identities, then maybe the silence that will follow them is more indicative of our school’s culture than any answer ever could be.

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# Beyond the Likely Answer

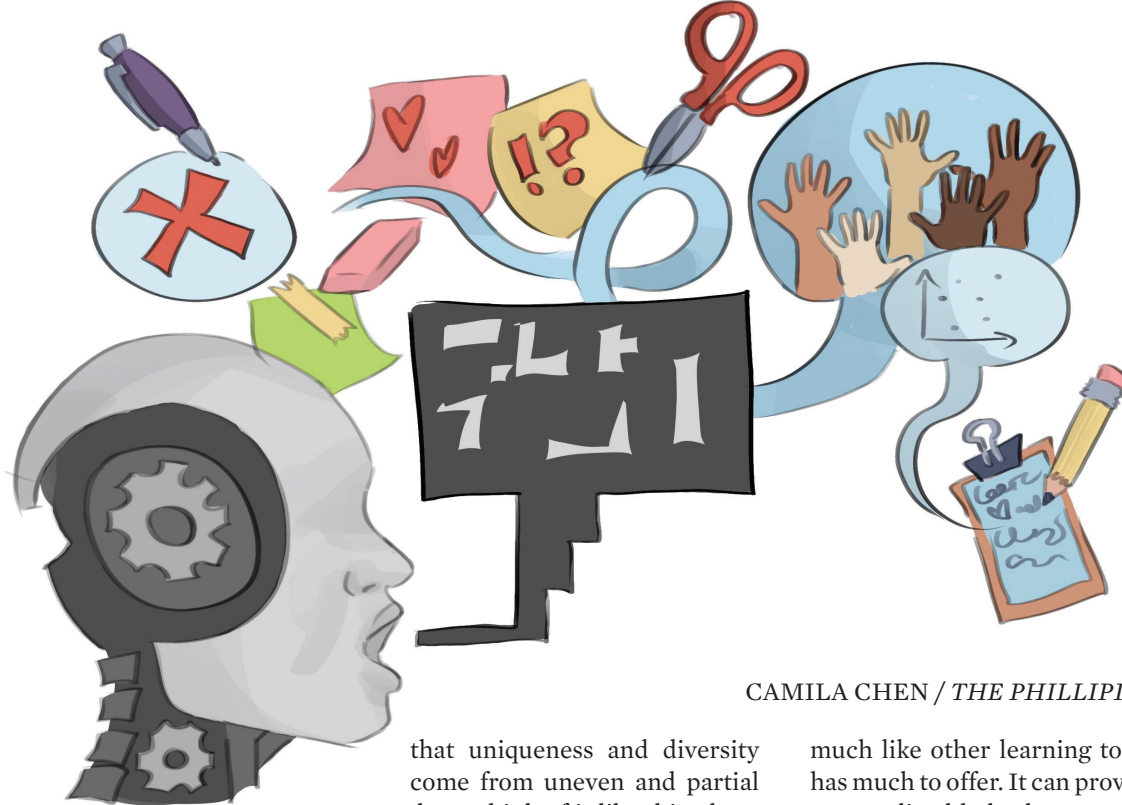
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J. NUÑEZ / THE PHILLIPIAN

In a study conducted by researchers from Stanford University and the University of Washington, 70 different major large language models (LLMs) were asked various open-ended questions from philosophy, business, and literature. Each of these models varied in structure and training data, and was developed by different corporations. Surprisingly, however, most of these models produced similar, if not identical, responses. It seemed as if the models were approaching a common asymptote of thought. As Andover makes efforts to incorporate AI models like Khanmigo in the learning experience, we must be aware of these weaknesses of AI and identify what areas we can let them contribute to our learning.

LLMs are a type of AI that is most familiar to the public; ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and Grok are all examples of LLMs. These LLMs are inspired by the human brain and the state of connectivity of biological neurons. After this structure is developed, it is trained on



CAMILA CHEN / THE PHILLIPIAN

data, similar to how young humans learn through textbooks or experiences. Unlike humans, however, LLMs can learn much more and faster due to their superior computing speed and amount of data. The key here is the sheer volume of data. The more a model learns, the more

## The crucial question to ask is not whether to use AI, but when to use it.

it adjusts towards giving the most probable response.

It’s also possible to interpret this inversely. Just like how the massive amount of data leads to homogenization and loss of uniqueness, it stands to reason

that uniqueness and diversity come from uneven and partial data. Think of it like this: there are billions of dots on a scatter plot. How will the estimated mean differ based on how many sample points are given? Statistically, more points given lead to less noise, leading to a more accurately predicted mean. However, fewer points given translates to noise having more voice in the mean, which produces a more variable mean. We, as humans, are that low-sample graph. Each of us is shaped by a singular, irreproducible set of experiences. That limitation is not a flaw. It can be the source of what is original in us.

This matter of LLMs is becoming increasingly important as Andover is beginning to incorporate AI into learning. Khanmigo, an LLM developed by Khan Academy, is being introduced into selected classes starting this spring. Khanmigo,

much like other learning tools, has much to offer. It can provide personalized help that may not be accessible due to larger class sizes or a lack of time. It is also efficient at providing fast, real-time responses without having to email or schedule a meeting with an instructor.

Because of these clear pros and cons of AI-integrated learning, the crucial question to ask is not whether to use or ban AI, but when to use it. LLMs have their clear disadvantages, including a tendency towards uniformity. Khanmigo, though a learning tool, is nevertheless an LLM and may display similar trends seen in the study mentioned earlier. Furthermore, learning often doesn’t come from simple answers to questions. When I think back to moments that spurred growth and realization, it was through discussions and the sharing of diverse views that allowed me

to see the full picture. These methods are obviously not as efficient as AI tools can be—discussions take time and patience, and may not be as accessible as a website. On the other hand, Khanmigo and other AIs can be outstanding in their ability to help clarify concepts and guide practice. But for responding to questions with no determined answers that require discussions, the diversity of perspectives matters more than efficiency.

Thus, to adapt and to adopt AI in our lives as students is not a simple yes or no question. It is to recognize AI’s strengths and weaknesses, and use them accordingly. Ultimately, the goal of education at Andover is not to reach the most “likely” or common answer, but to find and cultivate the unique “noise” that only you can produce. If we rely on LLMs to navigate the gray areas of learning, we risk converging our thinking into a single, predictable asymptote. By preserving the productive inefficiency of human discussion, we ensure that our growth stays human and beautifully unpredictable.

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# Why Protests Fall Short

ANDREW PARK



E. CHAI / THE PHILLIPIAN

On March 28, 2026, the third series of “No Kings” demonstrations took place in thousands of cities, with the largest in St. Paul, Minnesota, New York, and Washington, D.C. This demonstration is a response to unpopular decisions by the federal administration, targeting Trump’s aggressive deportations, war in Iran, and expanding political influence. Additionally, the No Kings organization stated, “In America, we have No Kings.” While the subject matter, protesters shunning politicians abusing political systems, is incredibly grave in a time of rising authoritarianism, the protest was less of a crisis and more of a curated parade. The “No Kings” protests were populated with colorful signs and funny costumes, following a trend that has dominated political demonstrations since June 2025: a shift where protest is used for expression, not for leverage.

The Andover community has had recent attempts at large-scale protests, with the latest Anti-ICE Sit-In Demonstration bringing in more than 100 students, according to *The Phillipian*. However, the protest’s awkward timing led to students who needed to take tests being effectively barred from participating, whether or not they wanted to participate. This problem of “scheduling conflicts” was solved by the No Kings organizers by taking place when most don’t have commitments. For example, the No Kings demon-



CARINA PAIK / THE PHILLIPIAN

strations have routinely taken place on Saturdays, having a fixed schedule, and often working with local governments in order to maintain safety. These guidelines led to the large turnouts from working-class people, who normally wouldn’t be able to participate in a weekday protest due to work restrictions. Logistically, it is much easier to promote participation for a protest if it’s on a day without work, takes only a few hours of one’s day off, and is safe. However, by solving the scheduling conflict, which had barred Andover students from the Anti-ICE Sit-In, the original movement is sanitized by stripping away a lot of political friction required to force a political response.

When protests happen during the workday, they can generate friction, especially when it restricts the movement of traffic to workplaces. If workers are slowed in their path to work, it may decrease the company’s output. This is one variety of friction that often pressures governments to act because it has a great interest in keeping the economy flowing. For the government, if the protest slows

the economy, yielding would reasonably remove that friction and reintroduce stability. However, when millions show up on Saturday, the government has no material reason to listen to demonstrators. Fundamentally, the expression-first demonstra-

**The “expression-first” model stands in stark contrast to the economic realism of the Civil Rights Movement. The success of the protests at the time were not due to raising awareness, but material tolls.**

tion allows governments to turn a blind eye.

This “expression-first” model stands in stark contrast to the economic realism of the Civil Rights Movement. The successes of the protests at the time were not due to raising awareness, but material tolls. First of

all, protesters slowed the economic foundations of society, whether that be through sit-ins or boycotts. As local businesses and transportation services suffered economic tolls, protesters forced officials to choose between economic stability and maintaining segregation. Ultimately, they chose economic stability.

Furthermore, the largest protests had the support of organizations with tangible political organizations, often unions and civil rights advocacy groups. MLK Jr., for instance, worked closely with the NAACP and SNCC, generating grassroots connections across demographics, and later worked with the AFL-CIO’s unions to coordinate the March on Washington. Using these voting blocs, the movement was able to use the diverse nature of these organizations as well as the union’s power to strike, holding power against the government through grassroots energy and economic means. While these pillars led to immense change with existing systems, modern protests seem to lack that spine.

If we are to reclaim the utility

of dissent, we must shift our focus toward grassroots economic power and uncomfortable disruption. As long as politicians remain primarily beholden to large donors, the voices of the masses will remain background noise. True pressure only occurs when politicians are economically tied to their constituents and when a threat to withdraw support carries the weight of a lost career. When disconnected politicians hear constituents being unhappy, yet not changing any tangible aspect of the nation, why should they care? If that protest doesn’t affect the status quo, their position wouldn’t be affected.

Moreover, we must stop asking for permission to be heard. A protest that respects a time slot and doesn’t disrupt traffic is a protest that has already been institutionalized. If we want to move the needle on issues of governance, we must be willing to make our dissent inconvenient. Traffic must be impeded; offices must be stalled; the economy must feel the weight of the public’s dissatisfaction. We must look to the Civil Rights era, where uncomfortable changes to the norm led to actual change. The bus boycotts were not an agreement, but a direct opposition to a force that led to oppression.

At a place like Andover, where we are taught to engage with the wider world, we must recognize that opposing the world without public pressure is merely a performance. If we want to see change, we must be willing to trade our signs for strategies and our parades for power. Until a protest costs the government more to ignore than it does to address, the facade of a protest will dominate supposed political dissent.

*Andrew Park is a Lower from Frisco, Tex. Contact the author at [apark28@andover.edu](mailto:apark28@andover.edu).*

# Andover Needs Intergenerational Education

JEANNIE KANG



K. MA / THE PHILLIPIAN

When people tell me, “You have an old soul,” I take it as a compliment. Raised by my grandparents, I’ve learned to embrace the beauty of age and the wisdom that comes not from books, but from experience. While other kids spent time in playgrounds playing cops and robbers or hide and seek, I helped Grandma carry groceries to our apartment. While my elementary school classmates held hands with their moms and dads back home, I piggybacked on Grandma, singing songs and reciting Korean poems. While other kids waited for their parents to come home from work, I worked with my grandparents on household chores, cooking rice, and adding small portions of kimchi into banchan plates. Belonging to spaces with older adults taught me what aging with grace and wisdom looks like.

On the other hand, with the birth of my little brother, with a 9-year age difference, I spent time in spaces with younger people, from my two brothers to their friends. They updated me on the newest slang, the gossip



ELLE PARK / THE PHILLIPIAN

of their schools, and the newest crushes between their 7-year-old classmates. More importantly, interacting with younger people taught me to impart my piece of wisdom while learning from their fresh, untainted souls.

Coming into Andover, I hoped to find similar intergenerational spaces that I’ve found myself in most of my life. I learned the value of forming bonds across all ages, and was ready to interact with people of all ages from all around the world. However, though exploring CAMD clubs and different DEI-related initiatives opened me up to a new world of diverse people and cultures, I realized that not a lot of these spaces focused on intergenerational connections. Though some opportunities to interact with children exist, such as SHED and other community engagement programs, chances to engage with older members of our community are largely absent. Spending most of our time in a secluded boarding school community, students

miss the opportunity to interact with people of all ages at this critical point of growth; our grandparents, siblings, and relatives are absent from our lives, and virtual interactions do not suffice to encourage meaningful conversations. It is time for Andover to establish spaces for intergenerational connections.

From the realization that many Andover students lack critical engagement with people of all ages, I founded a chapter of The Legacy Project last term on campus. Other members and I visited a local senior center in North Andover to learn about the stories of senior residents. Interacting with older adults

**Intergenerational spaces can provide much-needed-comfort and joy to our community.**

and sharing reflections with other Andover volunteers reaffirmed my beliefs in the posi-

tive correlation between cross-age conversations and growth in maturity. On the first day, I learned to truly value relationships from a lady who shared her grief after her husband’s death. Another day, I learned to embrace my passions and start early, from the regret of a resident not exploring his talents in tennis early on. The Legacy Project is merely a representation of the broader potential of intergenerational connections to educate people of all ages. The report by Stanford Center on Longevity, “Intergenerational Relationships Can Transform Our Future,” states that “older adults, with their unique abilities and motivations, are increasingly positioned to help [younger people] profoundly.” Laura Carstensen, a professor at the center, explains that children now in grade school will live in societies with a large portion of older people. The aging nature of the world makes intergenerational relationships more important in educating both the older and younger generations to interact with each other in

respectful, affirming manners.

Beyond the educational value, however, intergenerational connections are plain entertaining. During a volunteer session, I spoke to a resident who had an intense crush on a girl 50 years ago, and wrote a love poem with his friend to persuade her to break up with her stable boyfriend and spend time with them. He recited the poem perfectly and told us that she responded with a poem asking them to send letters in the future instead of writing poems. Different generations internalize diverging cultural and social norms, from the way we express love to the political climate of the time. Interacting with individuals who have very different way of viewing the world is entertaining, since we learn that people can value and enjoy life in so many different ways. Likewise, intergenerational spaces can provide much-needed comfort and joy to our community, especially when life feels hectic and mundane.

We have all felt too young and immature, and we will one day all grow to get older and reflect on life. Sharing parts of our lives with younger and older people helps us discover ourselves in their stories. Beyond the barrier of age, we all share struggles and victories, loving relationships and losses. It is time for Andover to open up spaces for these critical conversations, to connect people of all ages, and find that we are all human in our core.

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## Cluster Co-President Candidates Expand on Platforms

Continued from A1, Column 5

level, what our impacts are on campus to the world beyond Andover," said Han.

Larkin Techentin '27, running for Abbot Cluster Co-President with Wendi Wei '27, pointed to gaps between grades that the pair hopes to address.

"Especially since Abbot is mostly smaller dorms in stacks, we find that there's often a large disconnect between upperclassmen and lowerclassmen and all the dorms in general. So, going into this process, Wendi and I really want to emphasize community bonding. That might be through more tournament-based activities or even community bonding mixers and dorm mixers like slip-and-slides and cookouts, and overall, we just want Abbot to feel like a fun place and with approachable leaders," said Techentin.

West Quad South Co-President candidates George Richardson '27 and Shiloh Robinson '27 reflected on the personal importance of their cluster. Richardson mentioned the gap often observed among boarding and day students, which he hopes to reduce.

"Being a day student, knowing that we have the largest day student representation out of all the clusters, it means a lot, because taking on a role such as Cluster [Co-President] means that we would have to represent both boarding life and day student life. For me personally, I would want that good integration of both the day student and boarder life. We're really trying to take down that barrier of boarders between day students," said Richardson.

Robinson also touched upon the importance of cluster spirit and energy at Andover, especially seen at Cluster Olympics.

"This year, I got to know my Cluster Co-Presidents because I always see them at the munches, and they're always super energetic. I've also been in West Squad South for three years, so I have a lot of spirit for West Quad South, and I really enjoy cheering people

on at Cluster Olympics," said Robinson.

Jonathan Oh '27, running for Abbot Cluster Co-President with Mwaita Nyakujarah '27, addressed the role's time demands and his commitment to them.

"One thing that [Mwaita and I] are committed to [doing] is free up our Wednesday nights, evenings, free up our Thursdays, and work very hard on the weekends in order to free up that space. On Wednesdays, we have Cluster Council, lunch, and then maybe even some [Growth and Accountability Plan] meetings to do. We understand and are aware of which blocks in our schedule that we need to leave open and dedicate to being a Cluster Co-President," said Oh.

Nyakujarah brought up making greater use of the Abbot Campus as a priority for her and Oh as Cluster Co-President.

"Abbot Campus is such an amazing part of Andover's history, and it would be great for us as Abbot Cluster to explore that history through being present on the campus. So, some of the things we're thinking of doing is hosting cluster events that would be open to the whole school in untraditional Abbot spaces. These untraditional Abbot spaces could be a movie night on Graves Field and picnics on Abbot Campus, just to really explore all that Abbot has to offer.... Having the opportunity to represent the community that we strive to build is a really important thing for us," said Nyakujarah.

For Kit Leckerling, West Quad North Cluster Dean, the representation of a strong cluster Co-President embodies leadership and acknowledges the importance of presence and connection in the cluster community.

"I think about the current Co-Presidents from West Quad North. When they're walking around, the other students in the cluster know them, they see them, and they know that they care about them. They could go up to them and talk to them about anything if they had a question or concern. In daily life, it goes a long way to know that there's someone there for you in that way," said Leckerling.

## Administrators Explain Purpose of Wellness Programs

Continued from A1, Column 3

games, things they'll usually associate with low-stress activities," said Bajaj.

Dianne Domenech-Burgos, Chief of Staff and Assistant Head of School for Strategic Planning, assisted with the organization and planning of the events. Domenech-Burgos spoke on their purpose.

"We really wanted to have something for the community at the start of spring term. It's exciting for some and scary for others who are waiting for college decisions, and we just wanted to make sure that we had a bunch of events that would keep students happy, in fact, and adults as well," said Domenech-Burgos.

Domenech-Burgos continued, "I want to do this every spring term... I know that some people might want it in Winter Term because it's a hard term, but coming

back from spring, some Seniors are still waiting to hear about college acceptances. So, it's a fun way to get it started."

Vivian Báez, Director of Counseling and Psychological Services, mentioned the goal of providing similar opportunities to destigmatize and promote mental health on campus in the future.

"In past years we focused more on student workshops. This year we were intentional about creating something that felt more informal and more accessible... We want to continue closing that gap between students who need help and students who are reaching out for help. Helping students understand that it's OK to reach out for help. We want to continue to create opportunities where students can meet with counselors in workshops, mental health/wellness events and informal drop-in events," wrote Báez in an email to *The Phillipian*.

## Siahaan and Kim Express Gratitude and Excitement for Future Initiatives

Continued from A1, Column 5

so proud of both of us. Before every single round of voting, I was so stressed. I would call David, and he would have to help calm me down. This entire process, just putting yourself out there, [is] so scary, but also it's so rewarding at the same time," said Kim.

Aziabor pointed to Siahaan and Kim's messaging at the Co-Presidential Debate and the practicality of their proposals as strengths of their campaign.

"For me, a highlight was their opening speech. The way they phrased it around their biggest fears as Andover students was really creative, and it was a really compelling way to talk about their hopes for the presidency. This year in general, we've tried to really focus on having these candidates come up with ideas that we really think they could get through and be feasible. David and Minnie were the epitome of that. They worked really hard to come up with things that they thought were still fun and still needed for the student body, but also things that they could very well get through," said Aziabor.

Meng highlighted initiatives in the pair's platform that he particularly appreciated.

"In terms of their platform, I'm excited about the idea of the [event] punch cards because I think that [it has] a lot of potential for increasing the amount of spirit at school. I also think that the other initiatives, such as the Head of School festival or the Community Conversations, are great measures to increase the amount of connection that we get on campus, which is becoming increasingly important," said Meng.

Before officially assuming the role in the fall, Siahaan and Kim will undergo a transition period alongside the current Co-Presidents, meeting with administrators and being involved in student leadership processes. Reflecting on their tenure, Meng encouraged Siahaan and Kim to begin outreach and planning to implement their initiatives, while Aziabor emphasized the importance of staying grounded in their original motivations.

"One piece of advice is don't forget the main reason as to why you signed up for this in the first place. [David and Minnie] are really driven people, but they're also really kind and really welcoming, and that's one of the

most compelling parts of their partnership. They should remember that, at their core, what they really cared about was connecting the Andover student body and connecting people together. They should never lose sight of that," said Aziabor.

Kim and Siahaan expressed gratitude towards the Andover community for their trust in the pair's leadership and shared their enthusiasm for assuming their roles.

"The hardest part is putting yourself out there and just having faith in the people that they will choose who they believe will work for them and who can get things done. I'm just so proud Andover has decided to trust us... to follow through with our initiatives [and] represent this entire school. We can't wait to get started," said Kim.

Siahaan added, "I still want to be the person people can walk up to. I still want to be the person that says hi to people on the paths. I don't think any of that will change. I'm still going to be positive [and] enthusiastic, and hopefully spread that joy to the rest of Andover."

*Editor's Note: David Siahaan is a Sports Editor for The Phillipian.*

## Current Blue Key Heads Share Advice for Application Process

Continued from A1, Column 2

scripted. I'm not really a big improv person, which has always been the one thing I always get a little tense about. But I think this will definitely be good for getting me out of my comfort zone, trying something a little new," said Kawooya.

Jack Farrell '26, current Blue Key Head, reflected on what inspired him to apply for the role last year.

"It kind of just came down to my love for this school and my love for the athletics here... I would go to games and stuff, and it would be pretty empty, there wouldn't be a lot of people there. And I just felt that if I were in this position, I would be able to have more influence over getting

people to show up to games and cheer on their classmates and peers. I think that part of being influential was really the deciding factor," said Farrell.

Maddie Greenwood '26, another current Blue Key Head, reflected on how the Blue Key Heads are meant to synergize with each other and emphasized the value of being approachable.

"Every Blue Key Head contributes differently to the group, and everyone plays to their strengths. For me, just being a friendly face on campus, saying hi to people, smiling to people, and just the little things that on a day-to-day [basis] for students make a difference... If you can welcome those people and make them feel comfortable however you can, it goes a long way," said Greenwood.

Farrell noted that confidence is key to performing the role well.

"The best trait you can have is

confidence. You spend so much time in the spotlight and so much time embarrassing yourself that you have to have that security and self-confidence where you can do whatever in front of whoever and still be happy with yourself," said Farrell.

Greenwood offered advice to prospective Blue Key Heads, underscoring the importance of not conforming to others' expectations.

"Be yourself no matter what... You have to know that what you're doing is for our community, and what you're doing matters. Don't try to be someone else. Just act how you know how to be, and that's usually when the most efficient outcome happens. You interact with the community, and you lead the student sections in the ways that you know how," said Greenwood.



AUDREY BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN

After a lively Co-Presidential debate on Friday, March 29, students entered Paresys Commons to the melodious sounds of a violin duet by Matthew Wei '28 and Brian Zhu '26.

## HERE AND THERE: THE WORLD RIGHT NOW

REPORTING BY RIAANA BAJAJ & JEREMIAH NUÑEZ

### Politics: "No Kings" Protests Draw Nationwide Turnout

The "No Kings" protests drew massive crowds across the United States on March 28. According to The Washington Post, more than 3,300 rallies were held across all 50 states, with demonstrators protesting against the Trump administration's policies on immigration and war. As reported by the BBC, the movement reflects growing concern among participants that Trump's presidency is becoming increasingly authoritarian, with the protest being framed on how there are "no kings" in a democracy. The Guardian notes that these protests are part of a larger ongoing movement against the Trump administration, which includes boycotts, rallies, and walkouts promoting the rule of law and the Constitution.

### Global Affairs: UN Declares Transatlantic Slave Trade the "Gravest Crime Against Humanity"

The United Nations General Assembly has passed a resolution formally recognizing the transatlantic slave trade as the "gravest crime against humanity," marking a step in global efforts to address the enduring effects of slavery. The Guardian reports that the resolution, which was led by Ghana and backed by the African Union and the Caribbean Community, was approved by 123 countries. The United States, Israel, and Argentina voted against it, while the United Kingdom and members of the European Union were among the 52 abstentions. According to UN News, the resolution also calls for reparations, urging countries to consider actions like removing barriers against people of African descent, ensuring reparatory justice, and expanding equal access.

### Technology: OpenAI Shuts down Sora Video Generator to Prioritize "Elsewhere."

On March 24, OpenAI declared its decision to shut down Sora, the company's AI video generator model. Despite signing a three-year, billion-dollar licensing deal with Disney to use their brand characters like Mickey Mouse and Yoda, the company chose to shut down its operations. According to the BBC, the company did so to streamline its operations. The decision came with mixed reactions, including leaving Hollywood actors feeling hopeful, according to the New York Times. As this unexpected shift occurs, insiders aren't so surprised, as they didn't reach heights close to OpenAI's Chat GPT. When it was released in 2024, it quickly rocketed, yet didn't have the fuel to sustain permanent growth, according to NBC.

### Pop Culture: 20th Anniversary, Hannah Montana Reboot Garners Millions of Worldwide Fans

This week, Disney debuted the Hannah Montana 20th Anniversary reboot. In anticipation for the Hannah Montana reboot, how quickly the reboot was built caused fans to grow skeptical. While the reboot was promised to be a love letter to fans with nostalgia, fans feel uneasy, especially with Miley Cyrus' lack of enthusiasm. According to Variety Magazine, Miley Cyrus downplayed her lack of energy and excitement for the reboot, expressing, "Girl, I'm already tired." The reboot additionally aimed to attract a new generation of viewers, sharing the magic and attempting to have the best of both worlds, according to ABC. The reboot is available on Disney+ and Hulu.

### War and Conflict: Tensions in Iran Unfold

In the past week, tensions involving Iran have escalated with more military action. According to Reuters, regional clashes and retaliatory strikes have intensified lately, which raises fears that a much bigger conflict could break out across the Middle East. While the fighting continues to worsen, the Associated Press reports that the war has caused intensive damage to infrastructure, greatly impacting citizens. They also noted that even though people are trying to use diplomacy to calm things down, those efforts are being stalled right now. In addition, according to BBC News, global leaders are pretty divided on what to do. Some are pushing for everyone to show restraint, while others are actually supporting stronger military measures.

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# 10 Questions with Nathan West

REPORTING BY OLIVIA TEMPLE & JUDY LIU

*Nathan West is an Instructor in Spanish, a house counselor at America House, and a coach for Boys Junior Varsity Tennis, while assisting with Outdoor Pursuits. Speaking multiple languages, including Spanish, French, and Portuguese, he has lived abroad in various countries across Africa and Asia.*

## How did your childhood growing up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, shape your life journey?

Lancaster is a wholesome place to grow up. It's not a flashy place. It has an agrarian donut around it, which is the Amish community. It's a farming community, primarily. So, people there are honest and hardworking that will give you the shirt off their back if you need it. They're known for their delicious food and family values, and growing up there preserved me from a lot of the craziness that I might've been exposed to in bigger cities. It kept me grounded, and made me realize that ultimately happiness is not about possessions. That was a Lancaster legacy in my life.

## How have your experiences living in foreign countries shaped you?

I've lived in a few foreign countries. Each experience has marked my life in an indelible way. I studied in Spain during college, and that was really my first long-term stint abroad. Then I lived in Paris for three years. Paris put me in contact with Africa, because there are many African immigrants from other culture[s]. And I became really interested in the way sub-Saharan Africans speak French. So that lit a fire in me to travel through Africa and put me in contact with people I still know and love from West Africa, Senegal in particular. Then I lived in Sierra Leone, which is not a French-speaking African country. It's English-speaking, but I taught English there for a school year. That experience shaped me the most, [because] it put me in contact with people who have very little, and yet are non-complaining and content with the little they have. And it almost made me a bit envious, because they seemed way happier with their everyday life, even though it had so many hardships, than the people I know in America. I just thought, whatever their special sauce is, this contentment, this simplicity, I want it. The daily happiness quotient was so much higher in West Africa.

## What kind of music do you like to listen to?

This might be surprising for people, but... [at the gym,] most people want aggressive punk music so that they work out harder. I like classical music. It actually makes me work out harder. It's not necessarily restful classical music. There's some bombastic symphonic pieces with a lot of kettle drums and cymbal crashes and brass, and those triumphant orchestral pieces really get my blood flowing at the gym. I also love nineties pop. I do think the



CINDY ZHOU/THE PHILLIPIAN

nineties made some really great pop. And I love jazz.

I love Brazilian music. I have far-reaching and eclectic musical tastes. I love the simple kind of folk music I heard in West Africa. I love music from all over the world. It's a love language of mine.

## What languages do you know?

English is my birth language. My Spanish is solid. My French is solid. I've gotten into Portuguese in the past two years, and I'm making good progress. I just went to Brazil over winter break and had a lot of fun speaking Portuguese. It's kind of like if Spanish and French had a baby. It's got nasal vowels like French. 80% of the vocab is identical to Spanish, just with a slightly different accent. So you just need to learn a pronunciation code that's different. I have unfinished business with German. I took three semesters in college, and still have a dream of getting really good at German one day. We'll see. I'd love to keep on going, but I don't know if this brain can handle all those languages.

## You've mentioned you've worked in hotels before. Could you tell us about your experiences there?

To be clear, I was in hotel room service. I wish I had been a bellman. I can't say I was actively inspired to pursue hotel room service, but while I was living in New York City, trying to do the whole aspiring performer thing, I had to pick up a job. And there wasn't as big of a gig economy back then. Nowadays, you can find a lot of work on the internet, but back then, you had to show up face-to-face. So I found this job. It actually turned out to be pretty fun. I'd go into a celebrity's room at a fancy hotel in SoHo and serve them breakfast. You've also worked as an Amish carpenter, aspiring actor, hospital translator, and Spanish teacher.

## What is the common thread connecting these careers, and how did you settle on teaching?

The artistic aspirations in my twenties always led me back to language. When I was in New York,

I was ostensibly there to figure out music and acting, but I fell in with the African immigrant community from Senegal, from Mali. Language seemed to be the unifying factor, as in communication. It would be great, and it would still be great to act and to sing, which is mediated with language, but just the study of the languages themselves is the purest form [of working with language]. And someone said education is the highest art form, because the canvas is the human person. That's a really interesting quote to ponder. There's something artistic about education. You're crafting a lesson, how students appropriate knowledge, how best to do that. So there's something creative there.

## How did being an interpreter at the Lancaster General Hospital change your perspective on daily life?

It made me respect so much the immigrant community in Lancaster. It used to be an only Puerto Rican community, but then Cubans came, Dominicans came, Colombians, and there were

even some Argentinians in Lancaster. So when the doctor comes in and he says something, and then he goes out, you're left alone with a sweet 80-year-old Puerto Rican woman. So you talk about, what's your story? It's just fascinating to hear all these life stories about what brought people to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, farmland, which now has this huge Latino population. When you hear all those stories, there's just no way you can't tolerate immigrants. That job especially, probably more than anything, made me to really value the immigrants that we have amongst us, and be grateful for them and the ways we can learn from them.

## What do you hope that students know about your teaching philosophy?

I think they've caught on that I enjoy a little humor from time to time, but I hope that they understand that that's not license to break down the learning enterprise. It is still about learning. I think implicitly they understand that yeah, I like to have fun, but I also run a tight ship and have a high academic standard. It's going well. And I think students are figuring me out.

## Given a day completely free, what would you do with your free time?

I do love to work out. That's just like a natural antidepressant for me. Huge mood booster. I love reading in coffee shops. I don't know what it is about that, but the distant conversation that you can kind of hear helps me focus. I love the kinds of people that wander in and out. You can kind of temporarily insinuate yourselves in all these different life stories because you overhear, and a lot of them are artists or academics. It's just a fun vibe. I love planning trips and executing trips. I'm just a natural travel addict. And [I love] learning my languages.

## Through your acting, or hotelier, experiences, did you meet any remarkable celebrities?

My brother worked in show business, on the back end of things, and got me into the MTV Video Music Awards once, when I was at [New York University], and I remember waiting for the bathroom with Lenny Kravitz. But other than that, no. I can't say [I met people] directly through my pursuing performance. I met a lot of celebrities at my hotel job in New York, not as a peer in the art form, but by serving them breakfast. There was Jude Law, Alicia Keys, Kirsten Dunst, and Sean Penn. And [there were a] few I didn't know, but apparently they were famous.

# Dihh Lips Academy

## TOP 10 APRIL FOOLS ACTIVITIES!!!!!!

Konnor Fortini

1. Do the unthinkable and the most foolish thing of all: Read *The Phillipian's* other sections.
2. Graduate from Andover, major in chemistry, teach chemistry at Andover, move up the ranks until you become Natural Sciences Division Chair, and then *break bad*. Note: you would be following in the footsteps of many before you.
3. Put your name in as a potential candidate for the next Head of School.
4. Join the Varsity Football Team! Slowly, but surely, become the best player during the off-season. Once you become the best, apply for the new Director of Football Operations job that just opened.
5. Do the very horrible action of skipping the line at Commons.
6. Break into Rockwell and engage in their foolish activities. Tip: Bring a bottle!
7. Write an Eighth Page article for an in-class writing assessment. Your article could either get a 100 or a 0. Who knows when it comes to in-class writing?
8. Tell your teacher that they're important to your success as an Andover student and that you value their instruction. Bonus points if you get a 6 at the end of the term.
9. Love thy neighbor a little too much.
10. Scream in Commons 67! And wait for everyone to applaud you and throw roses at you.
11. APRIL FOOLS!!! I said 10 things, but it's actually 11!

## Week's Top Headlines

- *Andover Big Blue Boom Crew members arrested near Artemis II Launch Site*
- *Dean of Studies April Fools' Prank Goes Awry as 300 Seniors Switched into English 100 Cannot Switch Back*
- *Student Body Is Legitimately Confused About Where Commons Acquires So Much Viscous Pudding*

## Overheard on the Paths

- *"No more DoorDash means no more McDonalds! Now that's not very McCool!"*
- *"In prison you'd be worth 200 cigarettes."*
- *"Can you stop touching my feet?"*
- *"Call me J.P. the way I be lickin'."*
- *"Hey, you wanna go out sometime... no?... haha April Fools!"*
- *"Does age matter if it's a teaching fellow?"*
- *"Can you vibe code me a rose toy?"*
- *"This is a bigger victory than the Civil Rights Movement."*

## Arts Playlist of the Week

IAN MIN

### CONCERNED JR. '29 - "LOSE YOURSELF" BY EMINEM

"I fell in love with this song because of how I relate to it every time I walk into Commons. After ASM, I feel like I only have one shot or one opportunity to get food at a reasonable hour. Even after climbing over the manic crowd of Andover students streaming out of the chapel before the speaker even finished, it's a mad dash to get to whatever's good that day. Many days, my shoulders slump at the sight of yet another day of an exclusively turkey and cod menu. Last time I dared to indulge in the incredibly repetitive menu, I got food poisoning! My palms were sweaty, knees weak, arms were heavy. Next thing I know, there's vomit on my sweater already. I'm yearning for mom's spaghetti. Whenever that song starts, I get hit by a sense of nostalgia for the good ol' times when I still trusted Commons."



ANGELA GUO / THE PHILLIPIAN

### REVISIT KID '30 - "CREEP" BY RADIOHEAD

"When I first came to this school, I felt like I'd be a creep or weirdo! Like, what the hell am I doing here? I don't belong here! But then, I met my revisit host. I thought I was bad, but to think that this kid has friends at Andover was baffling to me. Every time he enters a room, let's just say that, "She's running out the door!" Although I did say yes to Andover, when I was here before, I couldn't look him in the eye. He's not like an angel. His skin makes me cry. Despite his presence being branded into my memory every time I hear this song, I still listen to it fondly, since it encapsulates the social anxiety that got me into Exeter.

### PHILLIPS ACADEMY ADMINISTRATOR - "WE DIDN'T START THE FIRE" BY BILLY JOEL

"I just love this song. It encapsulates the Core Blue values we hold here at Andover. Whenever the students start a walkout to demonstrate their disapproval of how current events are handled on campus, we blare this song in our offices. Kids these days do nothing but complain. The E-files this, Iran that, something something. Although this makes our lives quite difficult, we just keep telling ourselves that "We didn't start the fire. It was always burning since the world's been turning. We didn't start the fire. No, we didn't light it, but we tried to fight it." We've made sure to acknowledge all the hot, current events that students keep asking for. We're so up to date that we recently addressed the Lewinsky scandal after the class of '01 asked about it during their prom. We're so up to date that we know that Obama is the most recent president before Trump came to power."

## Perfect Lawning Day

- 1:00 A.M.: Practice wrist flicks in my room while watching professional spikeball film. I always hear my house counselor practicing these with his wife in the room over, but I haven't ever seen him on the Great Lawn.
- 5:00 A.M.: Homework.
- 5:00:01 A.M.: Finished up my art assignment. I love Senior Spring!
- 7:30 A.M.: Fuel up. I'm the person eating the egg whites at Commons.
- 8:30 A.M.: Attend Japanese 100. I can't wait to put on my XXXXS maid costume #kawaii
- 10:00 A.M.: Lawning!
- 12:00 P.M.: Commons does not provide nearly enough protein for my high-maintenance caloric needs (the average match burns around 300 calories, mostly from yelling at your partner), so I DoorDash.
- 12:05 P.M.: DoorDash driver drives onto the great lawn and dents the globe, creating an alcove for couples to nest. However, the show must go on.
- 12:30 P.M.: As the DoorDash driver's smoldering body is extricated from the globe and into a waiting ambulance, my partner (Mr. Capano), and I advance to the round of 16.
- 4:00 P.M.: Mr. Capano and I advance to the Spikeball finals.
- 4:05 P.M.: Tough luck. We get beat out by the Bancroft Elementary team.
- 4:20 P.M.: The Northeastern Spikeball Alliance rescinds my commitment. Frickin' grade deflation man.
- 4:21 P.M.: After watching a Kobe Bryant edit I am back on the grind.
- 4:22 P.M.: A passing helicopter makes me sad. It's time for a break. Let me do some homework.
- 7:05 P.M.: I forgot to drop Physics 553 so I just finished 2 hours of homework. I head out to the lawn to keep training.
- 7:11 P.M.: The sun sets. Spikeball now switches to shirts vs skins mode.



# The Phillipian SPORTS

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To LARP is to live.

April 3, 2026

## Boys Swimming & Diving's Dynasty Decade

EVA JACKSON

For the tenth time in a row, Boys Swimming & Diving has brought home the NEPSAC Division I trophy, extending a streak that started in 2017. To cap off its decade of dominance, 88% of the team's individual swims resulted in a personal best, one of the program's highest marks in history.

As a Senior entering his last season, Eric Nie '26 focused more on enjoying the moment. He reflected on the meet as a whole, expressing melancholy at the thought of his dwindling time on the team.

"It's the last time I'm ever going to be representing Andover, [so] it's definitely a lot more exciting than usual. I was just trying to have fun. Don't focus on the results too much. And I think that actually worked out really well. It definitely met my expectations. We all did good, especially the Seniors. I'm really proud of the best times that I got, how my teammates did, as well [as] the best times they got. At the end, when we won our tenth consecutive championship, jumping into the pool together was definitely special," said Nie.

In his last meet ever, Eric achieved a personal best in the 100-Yard Breaststroke with a time of 57.83. Fellow breaststroker and Co-Captain Ethan Zhu '26 also had a new personal best of 57.36. Both were Futures cuts, which is a significant swimming milestone.

Nie added, "I'm super proud that [Ethan] dropped, especially in his last event, the 100[-Yard] Breaststroke. He dropped like 0.5 seconds, which is really impressive. I'm really proud of how he's led the team this entire season."

Lincoln Tomlinson '27 won the Babcock Award, given to the most outstanding male swimmer of the meet. It was attributed to his record-breaking swims in the



COURTESY OF HAoyu ZHANG

Members of Boys Swimming & Diving who competed at the NEPSAC Division I Championships pose with their trophy.

100-Yard Butterfly, the 100-Yard Freestyle, and the 400 and 200-Yard Freestyle Relays. The 400-Yard freestyle relay was a meet record, while the 200-Yard Freestyle relay was a meet, school, pool, and New England record.

"Lincoln Tomlinson almost broke the school record in the 100-Yard Butterfly. He still got the Upper record. I was also super excited about his 100 [yard] freestyle. When he set the school record, it was really exciting to cheer for him. I'm excited for what he's going to do in the future," said Nie.

One of Andover's most dominant events was the 50-yard freestyle, where Jay Wei '27, Cale Barker '28, and Nick Koura '26 finished first, second, and eighth, respectively. Wei and Barker also found success in other events,

as according to Tomlinson, Wei split 19.97 on the 200-Yard Freestyle relay while Barker claimed third in the 100-Yard Butterfly.

"Jay might be the first person in Andover history to ever go sub 20 [seconds] in a 50[-Yard] Freestyle, either off a relay start or a flat start. That was super impressive and a great way to end Saturday, which was the first day. I would also like to shout out Cale Barker for going 49 [seconds] in the 100-Yard Butterfly for the first time in his life, alongside me. It was fantastic. I was very proud of him. You could see the hard work that I put in over the course of the season shine at this meeting," said Tomlinson.

The team's success over the past decade was a combined effort from both coaches and athletes. Simba Xiong '28 elaborated

on what the team did to set itself up for success.

"We have been showing up to practice almost every single day, including Saturday mornings, where we have some demonically hard sets such as the lactate set, the Super 100s, or the team-of-one. The lactate set is where you sprint 100 [yards], but you repeat that six times, which is very hard. But [all that work] really paid off in the end, since everyone achieved their personal bests. I would also say our training method is pretty scientific, especially the taper at the end. It really helped us to relax, and also to try to get the rest that we deserve," said Xiong.

More importantly, Xiong explained how the team's success was built on its community and values. While good recruiting

was certainly helpful, it was the fostering of a hardworking culture that helped swimmers flourish.

"The most direct reason is that many swimmers come here very fast, so with extra work, they become even faster. But the second, more important reason is the mentality. Every swimmer in the team really wants to improve, so they put in the effort to achieve that. And this applies to everyone, no matter how fast they are. We even see [that in] many of the freshmen, even though they're slightly younger. They're actually really mature and they know what they want; they show up to all the open swims and Saturday morning practices on time," said Xiong.

## Andover Shines at U.S. Junior Squash Championships: Isabella Tang '28 Triumphs in GU19, Kevin Wu '29 Places Second in BU15

JOHN LEW &  
NICHOLAS JUNG

After a successful season for both Girls Squash and Boys Squash, with just three losses each, five Andover athletes were invited to the U.S. Squash Junior Championships. This tournament stands as one of the premier stages for young squash athletes, drawing top youth squash players from across the country. Held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from March 13 to 15 at the University of Pennsylvania (UPenn), Andover was represented by Judy Liu '29 and Ava Kung '29

in the GU17 division, Co-Captain Corey Shen '26 in the BU19 division, Isabella Tang '28 in the GU19 division, and Kevin Wu '29 in the BU15 division.

Tang claimed her first national title in the U19 division, adding to her previous accolades, which include being a victor in the U15 division at the tournament. Tang described her performance throughout the championship match, which she won in 12-10, 11-2, 11-9.

"The first few points, I was really nervous, and I was really tense because the last time I played [my opponent], I lost to

her. I wasn't sure if I would win this time, but I started to loosen up towards the middle of that game. From there, I kept my momentum," said Tang.

Tang continued, "In the third game I was down 8-3. I wasn't sure if I was going to win that game, but I didn't want to make it easy for [my opponent]. I fought for every point and came back and won that game. If she had won that game, the momentum would have shifted completely. I'm glad I held my ground."

Now ranked among the world's best 150 U19 players, Tang elaborated on what she

learned from her title and her future plans for her squash career.

"My biggest takeaway was [that] I underestimate myself a lot, and a lot of the time, I don't realize my own potential. Moving forward, I want to focus on playing [at the professional level] and doing well in the professional rankings," said Tang.

Wu earned an overall second place in the BU15 division, only losing in the final championship match in 3-11, 3-11, 8-11. He described how the experience taught him valuable lessons that will improve his skill and technique as he progresses throughout his athletic career.

"I was working so hard leading up to [the final]. I was really sad [to have lost], but there were a lot of things to take away from it because there were some spots I can work on to get better. Now, I'm working on getting better as a player. Of course, I'm really bummed out that I couldn't win [the tournament], but this is my highest finish at [the competition], so it's something I'm proud of," said Wu.

In the matches leading up to his final game, Wu described how his approach to competing shaped his performance.

"I told myself, 'think about each point at a time, it doesn't matter if I'm down by a lot. Just try your best, stay focused on every point, and slowly, you're going to cut down the lead,'" said Wu.

For Shen, a Senior, this event marked his final tournament donning an Andover jersey. He

lost in the competition's first round in five sets, with a score of 8-11, 5-11, 11-5, 11-4, 5-11. Describing his performance as a bittersweet experience, Shen mentioned how he adapted to the unique environment he was placed in and the circumstances he faced.

"I felt a little bit nervous because I feel there's a lot more reassurance when someone who's watching from a third-person perspective can give you advice and tips. But throughout this process, I was coaching myself. As a result, because my dad wasn't there, I was also adapting to different conditions in terms of where I was living, who I was staying with, [and] what kind of food I'd be eating," said Shen.

Shen continued, "There are two kinds of different takeaways. It is important for me to have this set routine, and for me to know what I want to eat, have my whole plan scheduled out, and then also be very self-reflective during the match, so I can coach myself instead of having to rely on someone else to be able to give me guidance from the outside. [Another] takeaway is to have confidence and enjoy what I'm doing. It's so easy to get wrapped up in the result, but at the end of the day, if I just focus on playing my best and focus on really loving the game, the results will follow naturally."

Beyond Tang's, Wu's, and Shen's performances, Liu ultimately reached the semifinals and Kung fell in the tournament's first round.



COURTESY OF KEVIN WU

Kevin Wu '29, the runner-up in the BU15 division, attempts a stroke against his opponent.

BOYSTENNIS

## Leaving More Than Wins: Jeff Shen '26's Final Season

WYATT ORRACA-CECIL

Boys Tennis Co-Captain Jeff Shen '26 grew up viewing tennis as a solitary sport. But when he stepped on the court at Andover as an incoming Lower, he felt the team's camaraderie and strong bonds despite playing mostly separately on the court. Now, as Co-Captain in his final season, he aims to ensure the rest of the players can find value in being on Boys Tennis.

"I started [tennis at] age six. Basically, my dad kind of put a racket in my hand, and he said, go with some tennis balls. And I've been playing ever since... when I came into the [Tennis team at Andover], I could immediately feel the [tennis team's] culture. I was really thankful because that year we had a lot of strong members and seniors who [were] really life-changing for me. Andover introduced that team aspect [of the sport], where we go out, and we compete as a whole, you're not only worried about yourself, but your teammates next to you," said Shen.

Shen remarked on how his



CINDY ZHOU/THE PHILLIPIAN

experience playing doubles contributed to this sense of community.

"I hadn't played much doubles growing up. I'm mostly a singles player, but at Andover, doubles is really important in the high school tennis leagues... Andover was really marked by that unprecedented level of teamwork and team spirit, [which] almost pervaded this team," said Shen.

players well. He's also really good at giving feedback to our players, coaching and mentoring them, even though he's technically not our coach," said Richardson.

He continued, "Honestly, Jeff is pretty funny off the court, but on the court, he's really focused and driven. Jeff and I played a lot of doubles in my Lower year, and we had a really good dynamic going on for us. We're pretty loud on court, probably because Jeff has a way of pumping me up, and I have a way of, in turn, pumping him up."

Sean Liu '28 described how Shen makes teammates feel at home, both on and off the court.

"He leads by example, always very focused on the court and encouraging others to train with the same intensity. Off the court, he treats all of us like equals. He waves to me when I cross paths with him on the campus. Even during try-outs, on the very first day before I even made the team, he gave me advice on my return of serve, and I find it very helpful and comforting to know that he's like looking out for me," said Liu.

In his final season, Shen hopes to leave behind a lasting legacy by furthering Boys Tennis' welcoming and close-knit team culture.

"This year, we've seen an unprecedented amount of change. We've had, I think, 5 or 4 new players on the team. So it's going to take a little while for them to get used to this team, and I want to be as welcoming as I can to these new players," said Shen.

He continued, "I'd say my biggest goal is to lead by giving others the impression that it's okay to try new things. It's okay to have fun on the tennis court, especially since if you've been playing at this high level for such a long time, there's rarely room for fun or for reprieve. And I'd like to lead by showing these younger players that [Boys Tennis] is a place where you can improve, but also build relationships that will last a lifetime. I hope that this year we can achieve and foster a community like that because it'd be great to come back next year, visit games, and see that thrive with the players we have right now."

## Ben Shin '26 Leads Boys Tennis With a Focus on Team Culture

TIGER WANG

Ben Shin '26 first picked up a racket around the ages of five and six, beginning to participate in competitive junior circuits in the sixth grade. He now leads Boys Tennis as a Co-Captain, emphasizing the development of a positive, tight-knit team culture. As the team welcomes multiple new members this season, Shin's approachability and consistent playing style make him both a formidable opponent and a respected Co-Captain.

Shin reflected on his tennis career at Andover, which began in his Junior year. He emphasized the relationships he has built and how quickly his time at Andover has passed as he enters his final season.

"As a [Junior], I played number two singles, and it was a great season. I loved it. The people I met and my teammates are still some of my closest friends. Since then, my Andover tennis journey has been great," said Shin.

Shin continued, "[In my] Lower year, we brought in a lot of new players, went completely undefeated, and won the NEPSAC [Boys' Class A]

Championship. Last year, we had a similar group and a really solid season. We made the finals but lost. It was devastating, but still a great experience. Now, being here this year, it feels like just yesterday I was a [Junior] walking onto the team with all the Seniors."

Despite playing the sport well before coming to Andover, Shin found a newfound love for tennis after joining the team. Shin added that playing on Boys Tennis was his first time playing on a team, adding a new spark to his tennis journey.

Shin said, "Tennis is a very individual sport at its core. It's just you versus the other person, and in my... tennis experience [prior to arriving at Andover], I never really played on a team. Playing on a team at Andover has been really fun, and has reignited my love for the game, and has been more of a passion for me, playing with my friends, competing as a team. That's where the passion comes from and why I love tennis so much."

As a leader, Shin leads with his energy and passion. Co-Captain Jeff Shen '26 described the responsibility that Shin takes on for the team,



JULIE CHAN/THE PHILLIPIAN

holding himself accountable for the team's success.

"If I had one word to describe his play and his leadership, it would be passion. When Ben's on the court, you can tell he's not just playing for himself, but for the entire team. When I'm down after losing a point, you can always look over to Ben's court, and he's pumping his fist, supporting his teammates. That's what being a Captain is all

about," said Shen.

With many new players on the team, Shin is hoping to build chemistry and culture across the roster. Especially with Boys Tennis being a team of only seven athletes, culture-building is one of Shin's most important goals.

"We have a lot of new players this year, so my goal is to make everyone feel really comfortable and build a new kind of culture for Andover tennis. With a small team, you're around the same people the whole spring, so it's really important to feel connected and feel like you belong. I'm just trying to create a sense of belonging and community on the team, making sure everyone feels included," said Shin.

As a new member of the team, Sean Liu '28 described how Shin promotes a healthy team environment, adding that Shin's leadership begins at eye-level.

"He's very welcoming. We have four new players on the team this year, and he's very nice to all of us and treats us as equals. Even though he's been on the team for four years and is [a Co-]Captain, he leads in a way that never makes us feel beneath him," said Liu.

At the same time, Shen praised Shin for his strong fundamentals and baseline play.

"He's a super solid baseline player. His forehand and backhand are some of the most solid I've seen. He's able to grind out opponents by staying in rallies and outlasting them, not relying on flashy winners," said Shen.

## BOYS TENNIS

**Ⓞ BEN SHIN '26**  
BELMONT, MA

**Ⓞ JEFF SHEN '26**  
VANCOUVER, BC, CA

**SEAN X. LIU '28**  
SOUTHBOROUGH, MA

**NICK NAWRACAJ '28**  
HINSDALE, IL

**WILL CHU '26**  
ANDOVER, MA

**GEORGE RICHARDSON '27**  
HAVERHILL, MA

**TOMAS TEJAPAIBUL '27**  
BANGKOK, TH

**MANAGERS:** **JULIAN TAY '26**  
SINGAPORE, SG

**ROHAN AGRAWAL '26**  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

GIRLSTENNIS

## Co-Captain Evelyn Kung '26 Provides Constant Energy for the Team

AVIAD AWA

Girls Tennis Co-Captain Evelyn Kung '26 started her tennis journey at a young age. Growing up in Andover, she attended Andover's matches as a child and hoped to one day represent Big Blue herself.

"I've been playing tennis for a really long time, since I was about seven. I've lived in Andover, so I was able to come to Phillips Academy games as a kid, and I always knew I was really excited to hopefully make Varsity A when I got here. My grandfather was the person who got me into tennis to begin with. He would take me out every morning when I was little and teach me how to play, so I would say he was definitely one of my biggest supporters," said Kung.

Teammate Nitya Madduri '28 highlighted Evelyn's energetic leadership and its impact on the team's morale.

"She always leads our An-



COURTESY OF EVELYN KUNG

dover chant. She's always there for us, especially when we're having a hard day with academics or social life. I

know I can always count on her. Without her, the team dynamic would be very different," said Madduri.

As Co-Captain, Kung emphasizes uplifting her teammates both on and off the court.

"I think a good mentality is that when you're not playing, you should be cheering everyone on. As soon as I step off the court, if any of my teammates are still playing, I stay on the sidelines supporting them. Especially during doubles, my partner and I have a great relationship. It's our second year playing together, and we always have little rituals, like high-fiving every time we win a point. I think that really helps," said Kung.

Teammate Michelle Oh '29 pointed to Kung's composure in high-pressure moments.

"In close games, many people either freeze in tough situations or try to hit too hard and miss. Evelyn knows when to keep a rally going, stay consistent, and when to take smart winning shots. That's a really important skill she has in those tough moments," said

Oh '29.

Madduri also remarked on Kung's presence during practice, particularly in how she maintains a positive team atmosphere.

"During practices, she has definitely boosted our morale, especially with the seniors. We only have three seniors, and it's such a small team, so her impact is even more significant. This past week, when a lot of college decisions were coming out, she kept her mood positive and uplifting," said Madduri.

Looking ahead, Kung hopes to continue playing tennis in college at the club level.

"I think playing club tennis would be really fun. I'm going to a university where tennis is Division I, so unfortunately, I don't think I'd be able to compete at that level, but playing club there would still be a great experience," said Kung.

## Kendra Tomala '26 Leads Girls Tennis Through Collaboration

SARAH WANG

Co-Captain Kendra Tomala '26 joined Girls Tennis as a Junior, quickly establishing herself as a strong player and rising through the ladder. While Tomala was unavailable to provide comments to *The Phillipian*, her teammates spoke about her leadership and impact on the team.

Co-Captain Evelyn Kung '26 reflected on her experience leading alongside Tomala as the season began, particularly their priority of fostering a tight-knit team culture.

"Kendra and I work really well together. We've been hosting a ton of team dinners throughout the week just to really get everyone motivated and ready for the season because we're such a small team with only eight girls. It's really important that everyone just consistently shows up for each other on and off the court, and I think we do a really good job together prioritizing that," said Kung.

Michelle Oh '29, the only Junior on the team this year, described her experience practicing doubles with Tomala. Oh shared how Tomala's guidance and leadership style have helped her improve as a player.

"In double games that we do during practice, whenever I play with her, and I make a silly mistake, she turns it into a joke or takes it really lightheartedly and supports me. She says, 'Don't worry about it, next shot,' or 'we got this.' And I think that not taking things too seriously is a really good trait, and that's how she stays calm. Being a new [Junior] on the team, her non-judgmental characteristic and the quiet confidence that she has in herself motivate me to do the same. She also motivates me to just have fun with the team, especially during the first year getting adjusted," said Oh.

Kung also spoke to Tomala's influence on younger players, describing her work ethic and presence as setting a standard for the team.

"Kendra has been at the top of the ladder for many, many years. Obviously, she's a really, really good player. And I just think that because of her position, a lot of the other players look up to her and follow her example. She consistently leads the team in all of our matches. She's always there for all of us, even after her own match is finished, cheering us on the sidelines. I think she's one of the most dedicated and hard-working people I know," said Kung.

Oh described how Tomala's leadership style is also seen in her playing style, being aggressive and defensive when necessary.

"Kendra has a really quiet confidence that especially shows in her playing style because she knows when to be aggressive and when to be defensive, and that works really well because that makes her a really consistent player, especially against a wide variety of top players across different teams. At first, I felt like I was a little bit intimidated by her,



COURTESY OF KENDRA TOMALA

but getting to know her better as a leader, a tennis player, and also as a person, her kind, quiet confidence shows in her

playing as well as her leadership," said Oh.

## GIRLS TENNIS

EVELYN KUNG '26 **C**  
ANDOVER, MA

KENDRA TOMALA '26 **C**  
IRVINE, CA

LARA MADAN '27  
AUSTIN, TX

MERCAN DRAMAN '26  
BESIKTAS, ISTANBUL, TR

MICHELLE OH '29  
BEVERLY, MA

NITYA MADDURI '28  
HONG KONG

ANGELINA ZHANG '27  
TIANJIN, CN

MIRA PHAN '27  
BANGKOK, TH

MANAGERS:

SOPHIE LIANG '26  
CARMEL, IN

ANGELA ZHAO '26  
MANCHESTER, NH

BAILEY XU '26  
HONG KONG, HK

## New Faces, New Energy: Boys Tennis Grows Through Early Matches

LUCY VINNAKOTA

Boys Tennis (1-1) began its season with an opening 0-7 loss to defending NEPSAC champions Brunswick on Saturday. The team bounced back from the loss on Wednesday, emerging victorious BB&N on Wednesday in a final score of 5-2.

Last season, the team reached the finals of the NEPSAC Class A Championships, ultimately falling to Brunswick. With five new athletes on the Varsity A squad that competed against Brunswick on Saturday, Co-Captain Jeff Shen '26 elaborated on the atmosphere of both nervousness and eagerness before matches commenced.

"In the locker room, we were quite excited. Obviously, Brunswick is a really strong team, the reigning NEPSAC [Class A] champion. It takes a lot of nerves [to compete against them]. It is expected, given that we have five new players on the roster, which is unprecedented for a small team, [that] there were some jitters, but overall, a lot of excitement. Some of the new guys are moving up from Varsity B, and many of them are in their first year at Andover... Going into the Brunswick game... we had a lot of parents there as well, so it was super cool," said Shen.

Regardless of the team's final result on Saturday, the matches provided the team answers about what they should focus on moving forward in the season. According to George Richardson '27, who competes seeded third on the team, performance in doubles can be bettered before the next match on Wednesday, with improvements specifically stemming from closer connections among doubles partners.

"As a team, we need to get better at doubles. We are all really new to each other, granted that we lost four Seniors from last year. The doubles aspect in really getting to know our partners better is going to be a tough obstacle to overcome. We are a well-equipped team. We have a lot of resources at our disposal. We have a great [Head] Coach [Leon Calleja] and a great support system, so we can do that. It's just getting to know each other more and more over time," said Richardson.

Shen added that Brunswick's level of play, notably with heavy serves and strong fitness, and depth of its roster made it difficult for Andover to prevail in their matches.

"Brunswick has a lot of depth in their lineup. They have players who will go out there and bomb serves, and not be tired after you run them out. It was hard to keep up with their experience. Brunswick always has a very old ros-

ter and a lot of seniors on the team, and the experience really showed. They can adapt to different situations, they can meet challenges head on, and they can really ride with momentum," said Shen.

Against BB&N, victories in singles came from five athletes: second seed and Co-Captain Ben Shin '26, who won 6-1, 6-1; third seed George Richardson '27, who won in 6-3, 7-5; Tomas Tejadaibul '27, who won in 6-0, 6-1; and Sean Liu '28, who won in an abbreviated match in 6-4. In the team's fifth victory against BB&N, Shin and Shen won their doubles match 8-4.

Throughout its matches in its victory against BB&N, Boys Tennis emphasized team spirit by constantly cheering and encouraging one another, whether it be on or off the court. Liu, a player new to the Varsity A team, highlighted the differences in team motivation compared to Saturday.

"We supported each other a lot more than last Saturday. That is a big part of the team aspect of tennis, so we were always cheering on our teammates even while we were playing. When we saw the person on the next court over hit a nice shot, we would cheer for them. When we were not playing, we would be watching matches and cheering our teammates on," said Liu.

Liu continued, "The biggest lesson is supporting your teammates. Tennis is an individual

sport, but when we are playing as a team, we must carry each other on from the sidelines. When our teammates are down and they are losing points, we can still keep their spirits up and keep the intensity."

Boys Tennis will battle Nobles this Thursday.



CINDY ZHOU/THE PHILLIPIAN  
David Song '26 serves against a Brunswick opponent.

## Girls Tennis Emerges Victorious Over Groton in Opening Matches of the Season

JULIEN REQUA

WEDNESDAY 4/1	
Andover	6
Groton	3

Girls Tennis faced talented rivals Groton in the opening match of the season, playing away without the support of the Andover home crowd. The competition featured six singles matches and three doubles matches, with players of all grades representing both schools. After nine highly contested matches, Andover emerged victorious over Groton by 6 wins to 3.

Following just a few weeks of training, Girls Tennis visited Groton for the first game of the season. Despite the challenging first match, Andover displayed incredible skill and had several standout performances. Angelina Zhang '27 highlighted some singles matches and the support from her coach, describing her teammates' resilience and patience when faced with tricky opponents, as well as their passion for ensuring the team's success.

"Mercan [Draman '26] did really well in her singles match. Her opponent was doing slices every single shot, basically moon balls. Mercan did very well, and then she was hitting those deep and really wide shots, and then she was able to win with a significant differ-

ence. Coach Lapson was also really walking around observing every single match, trying to highlight and support people when mistakes happened," said Zhang.

With new players, the team had to adapt and showcase its skills in the important opening game. While six players competed in singles, others played doubles, and some balanced both, combining the focus required for singles with the coordination needed for doubles. Michelle Oh '29 reflected on the team's success and shared insights on the techniques the players were able to apply mid-game from practice.

"Kendra [Tomala's '26] volleying really stood out to me because she was getting all these low, hard volleys and

using their pace against them to hit winning shots. In the tiebreaker, it was going back and forth, but when we pulled away, I think it was mainly because of our consistency. I'm happy about my aggressiveness at the net towards the end of the tiebreaker because that's something that the coaches have been putting a lot of emphasis on," said Oh.

Despite playing in an unfamiliar environment, Andover maintained high energy throughout every match. The lack of support only brought the team closer as players grouped to watch matches and cheer on teammates. Draman described the support her teammates gave one another and the steps they took to keep spirits high.

"Doubles are all on at the same time, but across courts, we still like to shout out to each other, 'Go Blue!' And then during singles, two players who weren't playing singles were going around to all the courts and cheering us on. And then, whenever someone was done with a singles match, they would go and watch other people. So we were always cheering each other on," said Draman.

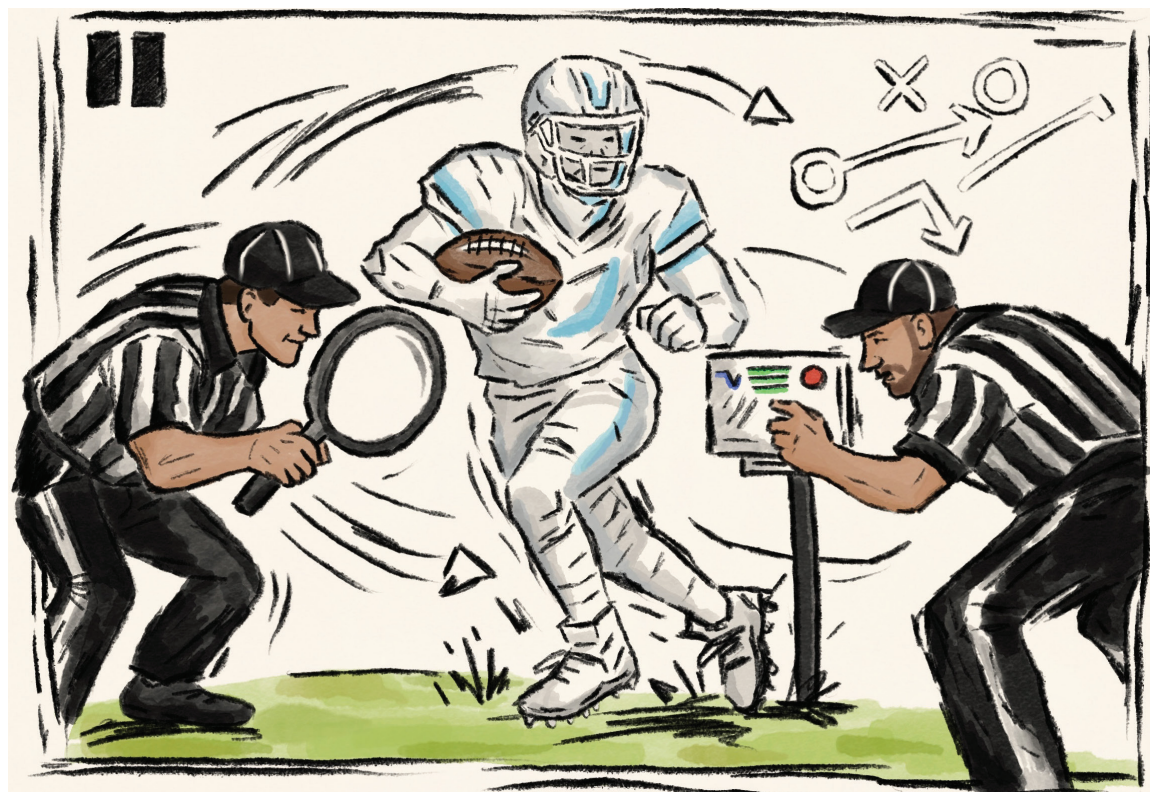
The team will look to add to its win by defeating Austin Prep and Winsor School next week.

## Instant Replay: Halting Momentum or Improving Fairness in Football?

EVA JACKSON

Instant Replay was first used in a full season of the National Football League (NFL) in 1986. The CBS network first introduced it in an Army-Navy game, ten years after the NFL began experimenting with the live-recording technology. Since then, the machinery has greatly developed, now with about 30 cameras per game, capturing every moment and every angle. This has also created new jobs, with replay officials and designated members of the officiating department who assist on-field staff in situations of ambiguous plays. Despite these developments, some fans argue that instant replay disrupts the flow of the game and halts momentum. I disagree with that assertion and believe that the technology has ultimately improved the officiating and fairness of NFL games.

The primary purpose of instant replay is to rectify mistakes that may have been missed in real time, including plays like touchdowns, turnovers, and boundary calls. Instant replay has also increased the transparency in sports by allowing fans, coaches, and



HARRY ZHOU / THE PHILLIPIAN

players to view the evidence behind each decision. By providing multiple angles and slow motion replays of pivotal moments, fans have had a heightened investment in each game.

Moreover, instant replay has vastly improved accuracy of calls and has affirmed staff impartiality. Coaches are permitted two challenges per game

to readdress a referee's call, and this measure has become much more successful with replay technology. According to ESPN, the 2025 season introduced 8K resolution cameras into each stadium that can pick up false fouls, increasing the coaches' challenges success rate by 21% compared to the year prior.

A chief criticism is that re-

play reviews take too long, interrupting both gameplay and audience engagement. Nonetheless, the rapidly developing technology blows past this argument. According to ESPN, the time it took for each review in the 2025 season was 1 minute and 25 seconds. This is a vast improvement from ESPN's reported 2 minutes and 20 seconds just two years prior. As

this time continues to shrink with the development of technology, this concern will fade.

Although instant replay offers a plethora of benefits, there are also aspects that require change. According to the NFL rulebook, a call will only be overturned if "clear and obvious visual evidence warrants a change." If cameras weren't positioned correctly or footage was incomplete, calls may not be overturned. This occurred in the 2015 game between the Detroit Lions and the Seattle Seahawks, where a controversial touchdown call was made using instant replay favoring the Seahawks. Though the footage of a player diving into the endzone was reviewed from multiple angles, it was still inconclusive. Despite the lack of clear evidence, possession was overturned, triggering widespread debate about the use of instant replay.

As technology continues to evolve and the Artificial Intelligence market blossoms, the landscape for instant replay is expected to grow exponentially. As time goes on, fairness will increase, continuing to outweigh fading drawbacks.

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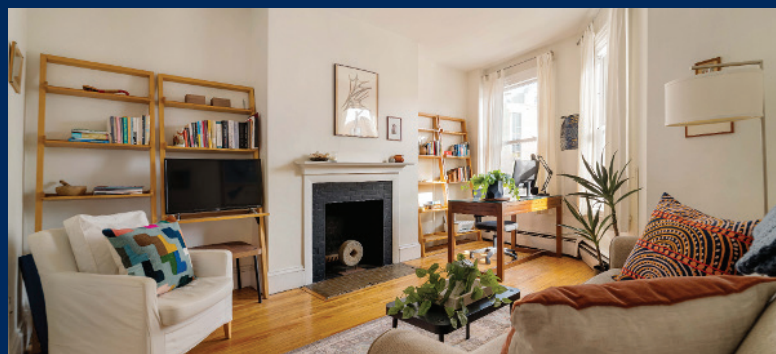
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## Baseball Starts Season By Splitting Games to Dexter and St. Seb's

**ATHREYA YEGNESWARAN & JOHN LEW**

SATURDAY 3/28	
Andover	4
Dexter	5
WEDNESDAY 4/1	
Andover	5
St. Seb's	1

After a narrow 4-5 loss to Dexter Southfield (Dexter) in the second game of the season, Baseball (1-1) bounced back dominantly, overwhelming St. Sebastian's (St. Seb's) with a 5-1 victory and setting an early tone for the team.

On Saturday, the team faced Dexter 4-5 in a tightly contested game. The match-up went back and forth, highlighted by big hits from Matt Uliciny '26, Caleb Penn '27, and Miles O'Neil '28. The game was defined by timely hits and two very close plays that could have changed the outcome.

"Caleb Penn got us on the board early with a sacrifice fly. He also had 2 hits in the game. Matt Uliciny had 2 hits, Miles O'Neil had a base hit up the middle that scored a run, and Jacob Honor came in as a relief pitcher and shut it down. He had a couple of strikeouts and was getting them to produce soft contact. There were also two very close plays at the plate. Dexter had very good, timely hitting. Overall, we might have played the better game,

but they got hits when they needed them. They had a 2 RBI double down the right field line and took advantage of a misplaced fastball in the bottom of the 5th for a triple off the fence," said Kaiden McNeice '28.

Against St. Seb's, Matthew Shampine '26 led the charge on the mound, throwing four scoreless innings with four strikeouts. Thomas Perri '28 recalled the impressive outing, especially noting a nine-pitch first inning.

Perri said, "It's really hard to pitch in cold and rainy weather, and he threw four innings and only 45 pitches. He didn't give up a run. He only gave up one hit, and he was just hitting his spots all game. He definitely stood out. Specifically, in the 1st inning, Shampine went out there and got three guys out on nine

pitches. It really set the tone for the rest of the game because it was cold and rainy, and it's hard to play baseball and that. When he went and got the first three guys out, that got everyone fired up."

The offense followed suit, capitalizing early to take control of the game. According to Owen Prior '29, a pivotal second inning saw Andover put up three runs, establishing a lead they would not relinquish.

"The 2nd inning is when we scored first: we scored three runs. That was really good because they had a good pitcher out there, but we were able to take control. Once we got out to that lead, we were able to hold onto it for the rest of the game," said Prior.

With the team so early into the season, most of its practices are meant to build

chemistry and communication. Prior noted that the team's work on game situations and fundamentals built confidence.

"During practice, we worked on some game situations and fundamentals. Even if not all the situations show up and we don't see all the little things we practiced, it still gives us a sense of confidence together. Another thing we worked on was pop-ups [which] are in between a couple of players that one player might go get, another player might go get, and we did a really good job of that, communicating with one another, and making sure we got the play done," said Prior.

The team will face Winchendon on Saturday.

## Girls Water Polo Triumphs Against Hopkins and Northampton in Season Opener

**OLIVIA WANG**

SATURDAY 3/28	
Andover	10
Hopkins	2
SATURDAY 3/28	
Andover	17
Northampton	3

On Saturday, Girls Water Polo (2-0) kicked off its season with victories against Hopkins and Williston Northampton (Northampton), scoring in the double digits while maintaining strong defense in both games. Despite having a short time to prepare and many players coming back after extended periods away from the sport, the team's determination propelled it to victory in the first game of the season.

The practices leading up to the game focused on getting the team settled into a steady rhythm to prepare it for the upcoming season. Camden Schopler '27 noted that the players had only a week to prepare for the game, and most practices centered around the basics of the sport, such as swimming and simple drills, to build a foundation.

"We had a very short time to prepare, only a week. The main preparation went into swimming and water polo skills without using any of the balls to try to get the new players and some of the returning players back into the groove of things. We did some scrimmages and simple drills to try to get people back into water polo because they hadn't played in a year," said Schopler.

Djenabou Bah '28 praised multiple team members, including new players, for their standout performances during the game, reflecting on how their commitment

and adaptability contributed to the team's overall success. These players, Anna Tinkova '26, Mary Li '29, and Camden Schopler '27, not only demonstrated technical skills, but also essential team skills like communication and awareness.

"We had this new player who's completely new to water polo. Her name is Anna. She did very well because we were learning really fast paced, but she was able to defend and listen to others while we were giving her points. She's a very good listener and did well. We also had diverse shooters. Mary, who's a new [Junior] to the team, got at least four to five goals. Camden did really [well] as well," said Bah.

Bah described the team's strategic approach for its first game, which was to prioritize safety and steady execution over taking risks. She credited the team for balancing instruction for newcomers while helping returning players regain their flow.

"This was our first week playing water polo, so we were trying to help teach new players and help returners get warmed up as well. Our plan was to try to stick to good defense and offense and try to get through the game as smoothly as possible. With very limited time and trying to teach new players how to play as well, I believe we did a good job," said Bah.

Helen McNeely '29 highlighted the team's positive energy and support before the game, which made a lasting impact on its performance. She emphasized the role of the upperclassmen, who were able to build confidence and ease nerves going into the game.

"There [are] only a couple lowerclassmen, so a lot of the upperclassmen knew the skill levels of the teams. When we were going into the game, it was nice to feel the energy from the locker room, especially for me as a newer flyer. It was a nice, supportive environment, and it was

very encouraging too," said McNeely.

Schopler mentioned that the win against Hopkins as well as the following victory on the same day at Northampton will give the team courage to defeat its next opponents in the coming week.

"Since we won both of our games because we had two games on Saturday, it will definitely be motivation to win our next two games coming up this Saturday, and it definitely motivated the team in regards to winning because a lot of us were nervous going into the games. That definitely will have an impact on our mental state going into these next two games we have this Saturday," said Schopler.

This Saturday, Girls Water Polo will take on a double-header against Deerfield and Greenwich Academy.

## Boys Ultimate Defeats Newton North to Kick Off Season

**EVA JACKSON**

TUESDAY 3/31	
Andover	13
Newton North	6

Boys Ultimate started off its season with a victory against Newton North High School (Newton North) this Tuesday.

According to Patrick Mendoza '29, Zachary Yuan '27 received a long end-of-game catch to score.

"My favorite moment was when [Zachary Yuan '27] had to run a very long distance to intercept the disc and score one of the last points of the game," said Mendoza.

For first-time players like Mendoza, nerves were high.

With a roster of mixed experience levels, the team leaned on a structured preparation to get everyone in the right mindset before the game.

"We were already doing warm-up exercises an hour before the game started. Then, we huddled up as a team as it got closer to the start, and it helped us calm down," said Mendoza.

Beyond the scoreboard, Andover's performance both on and off the field also upheld the team's reputation as the team with the highest spirit score in the NEPSUL Class A Division. Solon Chen '29 recalled a moment marked by a strong sense of mutual respect.

"The team overall is very supportive of one another, and opponent sportsmanship was really good. During the game today, there were a cou-

ple of people who got injured, and we knelt for them, which was a really nice gesture," said Chen.

Chen reflected on the win as both a boost of confidence and a diagnostic, citing defense as an area for improvement, specifically the failure to force counterflow, a technique where defenders pressure opponents into reversing the disc's direction, creating opportunities for interceptions.

"It was a very good starting game for our team because it lifted our spirits with a win, but [it] also showed us what we were good at, and what works well together, and things that we could improve on. We can improve on our defense because we let out a lot of easy chances that, if we just forced counterflow, we would have gotten an inter-

ception. We also have to stay tight on our [opponents]," said Chen.

Boys Ultimate looks to continue developing and preparing to face Concord-Carlisle High School on Wednesday at home.



ANGELA WANG/THE PHILLIPIAN  
Dean Yang '27 pulls the disc on Siberia Field against Newton North.

## Girls Softball Opens Season With Shutout Against Northampton

**XAVIER HOWELL**

WEDNESDAY 4/1	
Andover	9
Northampton	0

Softball kicked off its season with a commanding 9-0 victory over Williston Northampton (Northampton), despite rain and gray skies that nearly forced the game's cancellation. Softball's determination and focus prevailed, allowing them to take the field and deliver a strong performance.

The team combined strong hitting with tight defensive play, controlling every inning and keeping Northampton off the scoreboard. The batting lineup consistently put pressure on the opposing team, driving in runs and maintaining momentum throughout the game. Gabby Gillette '28 reflected on the

team's effort throughout the game.

"It was really exciting to get our first real game of the season in. The weather wasn't ideal, but everyone stayed focused and played with energy. It felt great to see all our hard work in practice come together on the field," said Gillette.

Softball will face Tilton at an away game on Friday.

## Boys Lacrosse Powers Through Hotchkiss and Middlesex with Decisive Wins

ALEX GODSEY

SATURDAY 3/28

Andover 12

Hotchkiss 9

WEDNESDAY 4/1

Andover 9

Middlesex 5

Boys Lacrosse (3-0) played Hotchkiss on Saturday and Middlesex on Wednesday, emerging victorious in both matchups. The two wins showcased both the team's offensive prowess and defensive might, building momentum for its upcoming games.

On Saturday against Hotchkiss, the team came out with a dominant first half, securing a lead. But despite the strong start that delivered a major blow, Hotchkiss stormed back with the finish of halftime. Brayden Ko '28 described the events, and the team's response to this adversity.

"In the third quarter, as we expected, Hotchkiss came out with a little bit more ferocity. They were down by a lot, but went on a scoring run. And the offense either couldn't get the blow or we couldn't maintain possession,



AUDREY BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN

Alex Dimnaku '27, a midfielder specializing in faceoffs, attempts a pass in Andover's Wednesday win against Middlesex.

so the third quarter hurt us a lot. Then the defense, we gave up a lot of shots that we shouldn't have given up, but nonetheless, we were up by one, and they were coming back... It was a good test of adversity, what to do when you face some challenges on the way, and the team handled that pretty well, and we were able to get out with the win," said Ko.

Throughout the entire game, Andover's offense played cohesively together, and out of 12 points, Boys Lacrosse had eight differ-

ent goal scorers. These goals were primarily the result of quick ball movement, setting up strong assisted goals. Luke Honos '28 commented on cohesion among his teammates and attributed the team's success to the fun the team has together both on and off the field.

"The team, especially on offense, is starting to learn each other's preferences. Then on defense, everyone's been working really well as a team. And that chemistry is really built in the locker room and when we're all having

fun together. In Florida, a lot of it started there, just team bonding, getting to know each other, having fun with each other," said Honos.

On the defensive side of the game, Ko praised Pierce Brill '28 for his performance. In addition to having a great showing on defense, Brill also contributed offensively with a goal.

"The unsung hero, who probably won't show up on the stat sheet a lot, was definitely Pierce Brill. I remember at the end of the game, our Coach [James Beaudoin]

said, 'if you ever want to learn how to play defensive [midfielder],' just look at Pierce. And if you watch the film from that game, you can see that he was really playing his matchup well. He had a goal, was flying up and down the field making plays, and just doing all the dirty work. So definitely, I would say, Pierce had a lot of great defensive highlights," said Ko.

On Wednesday, the team played against Middlesex, a powerhouse program that Andover has historically struggled against. The story of this commanding victory was the defense. Ben Kazlouski '28 shouted out Kele Gregory '26 for his stellar defensive performance and the momentum it gave the team on Wednesday.

"Kele Gregory ['26] always brings the level of physicality that we need on defense, and he was just doing such a good job in the open field and transition. He had plenty of take-away checks and big hits, and after you hear the crack of the helmets, the pads hitting, it really just gets the bench [energized], and you can see him sprinting, pushing in transition, making plays happen," said Kazlouski.

On Saturday, Boys Lacrosse will play Northfield Mount Hermon (NMH) at home.

## Girls Lacrosse Cruises to 10-Point Victory in Season Opener

BEN KAZLOUSKI

SATURDAY 3/28

Andover 14

New Hampton 4

Girls Lacrosse (1-0) kicked off their season with a commanding 10-point victory against New Hampton this past Saturday. Following a successful last season in which the team won the Prep Cup Tournament, the team had high expectations for its home opener.

Andover's defense was the backbone of the victory, consistently disrupting the New Hampton's offensive flow. Vanessa Hall '28 credited captain Quianna Bell '26 for her lockdown defense, ability to anticipate drives, and execution of well-timed double-teams.

"When New Hampton tried to drive the ball, she

would make good slides and double-team. There was one play specifically where she slid and double-teamed a girl that was driving and checked her, and then she got the ball, and we had a quick transition upfield," said Hall.

The third quarter is often considered the most important part of a game, as the energy and momentum right after halftime can snowball into a plethora of goals. Hall recalled how the team clinched its victory with quick goals after allowing their opponents to climb back within reach.

"The beginning of the third [period] was really big because we were up 5-0, but then we sat back and got down to 5-3. At the beginning of the third [period], we came out after halftime and scored three or four goals right off the bat, so we solidified our lead, and got us good momentum for the rest of the game," said Hall.

In lacrosse, a "ride" or "re-defend," as Regan Driscoll '28 calls it, is when the team loses possession in



KAYLA LYONS/THE PHILLIPIAN

Goalkeeper Maddie Greenwood '26 successfully blocks a shot against a New Hampton athlete.

its offensive side of the field and tries to gain possession back by applying pressure and playing full-field defense. Regan Driscoll '28 stressed the importance of the team's ride to its success.

"The re-defend on the other team's outlet made them turn the ball over, which gave us more offensive possessions, just overall, throughout the whole game, giving us more opportunities to score,"

said Driscoll.

Despite the dominant victory, the team identified areas for improvement and has much to work on in its upcoming practices. Hall anticipated that as the team progresses deeper into the season, the work put in during practice will allow the team to be more successful, even against stronger opponents.

"I anticipate that we do some ground ball work, and

maybe we'll continue practicing a ride, and our clears, so offense and defense can work at the same time. We will continue working in pairs, because we could have used each other a little better than we did on offense, and to work off each other more," said Hall.

Despite the team's overall success against New Hampton, Charlotte Dorman, PG'26, shouts out Emma Morrison '28 as particularly outstanding on offense.

"Emma Morrison came out with, I believe, three goals against New Hampton. She definitely killed it. Coach [Heidi] Wall sent us an email after, saying that we had 8 different scorers, so the goals really came from a lot of people, but Emma Morrison definitely stood out," said Dorman.

Girls Lacrosse looks to secure their second win of the season at an away game against Noble and Greenough (Nobles) this Saturday.

## Clutch Finish by Edward Zhang '28 Secures Season-Opening Ties for Golf Against Belmont Hill and Exeter

NATHAN BYUN

WEDNESDAY 4/1

Andover 3

Belmont Hill 3

WEDNESDAY 4/1

Andover 3.5

Exeter 3.5

Golf opened its season at the Red Tail Golf Club, battling Belmont Hill and Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter).

In a tightly contested competition, Andover tied with both of its opponents, posting various strong performances.

The match's defining moment, according to Rocco Fawcett '28, came from Edward Zhang '28, who delivered under pressure to secure ties against both Belmont and Exeter.

"We tied both matches, and Edward Zhang, who's our [sixth] seed, came in last and needed to win both matches. He clutched up and made birdie on the last hole," said Fawcett.

Ian Kim '28 noted that the course's structure and condition added an extra layer of

difficulty. Despite its difficulty, Kim took pleasure in competing on the course.

"It was a pretty tight course, so it was a little challenging, especially at the beginning of the season when we're not really consistent yet. The greens weren't in the best condition because it just got back from the snow, but it was still a challenging course that I enjoyed playing," said Kim.

Despite course conditions, Fawcett noted that he entered the match focused on building a strong foundation for the season.

"I really wanted to just get the season off to a strong start, [playing] not necessari-

ly perfect, but just solid golf," Fawcett said.

Similarly, Kim aimed to play strategically after a tough stretch in practice.

"I didn't play so hot in the last couple of practices, so I just wanted to play smart golf. I mostly accomplished that, except for missing a couple of putts," said Kim.

Prior to the match, Fawcett mentioned a feeling of nervousness that pervaded some Andover golfers' mindsets. He also described the freshness of this year's lineup, with multiple new faces on the Varsity squad.

"There were a lot of nerves. We have a [Junior] and a cou-

ple of people who haven't had a Varsity start in a while, but it was fun," said Fawcett.

Kim highlighted how the team's chemistry helped ease those nerves and contributed to a positive atmosphere going into the match.

"It was a very new team and a very new lineup, but we all got along really well. At the end of the day, we're all playing for the same purpose. Cheering each other on helped us get the results we wanted," said Kim.

The team is set to face off at Tabor on Saturday.



# ARTS & LEISURE

The Phillipian, VOL. CXLIX



## Jason Cai '28's Wardrobe Without Walls

**BENJAMIN PARK & DASHA GOMEZ**

For Jason Cai '28, fashion does not follow a linear path, and he aims for his fashion to be untethered to a certain style. Among his preferred styles include wearing white, chunky socks under cowboy boots, and pairing patterned tops with his unique collection of jewelry.

Cai's style is influenced by the term hybridization, where he

combines different aesthetics, time periods, and moods. Instead of dressing to match a certain label, he creates something completely of his own.

"A lot of my outfits don't just take from one place and call it a day, but rather they combine elements from many different styles and many different themes... I think that one of the core ideas or core messages behind fashion is that you shouldn't constrain yourself into neat organized little categories in boxes... This kind of meta style of hybridization and combining different clothing from different places into singular outfits is the most consistent theme I can identify," said Cai.

When creating individual outfits, the idea of hybridization becomes clearer

because rather than pulling from one certain aesthetic, he finds subtle connections between two completely different pieces.

"I might wear an outfit with a deeper V neckline, and then combine that with other V style triangular elements inside of my outfit, and have all of the individual pieces come from extremely distinct style backgrounds. I use consistent and shared components that don't necessarily define a style, but contribute to portions of it," said Cai.

Cai's stylistic foundation emerged when he realized that through experimentation with different combinations and ideas, fashion began to take a further role in his life.

"I found that days and weeks would very easily merge together, but wearing different things... allows me to better grasp the progression of time as I phase things in and out of my wardrobe... Fashion is something that is really impactful to me as a form of the art of the everyday, and also a key component in allowing me to always have something to look forward to the next day and to maintain a solid sense of time progression," said Cai.

Cai's day to day routine is to pick an outfit that centers a particular piece, one which sets the theme. Then comes all the other accessories.

"The way that I construct outfits is I find something to center or orient it around... So, for example, I might choose a color. I might go, 'Oh, I like this tie. Let me go ahead and see what colors can pair and match with this tie. Or I might say, 'Hmm, let's go a little bit more abstract rather than a specific piece of clothing,'" said Cai.

Cai sees fashion as more than just one part of life. For him, it is a way to explore and better understand his own identity. In the future, he hopes to stay involved in fashion, even though he is unsure whether he will pursue a career related to it.

"I'm unsure of what I want my life to take on yet, but I suppose that in a sense, fashion is a form of identity exploration for myself... I've had some ideas for larger scale fashion projects. I've been getting more into textiles,



JEREMIAH NUÑEZ/THE PHILLIPIAN

Jason Cai '28 showcases his variety of styles and colors.

knitting, selling, and I have ideas for fashion projects and things that I want to make. A few small things are embroi-

dery here and there, but I also want to make some larger garments," said Cai.



JEREMIAH NUÑEZ/THE PHILLIPIAN

Cai accessorizes his outfits with a variety unique necklaces.

## BTS's "ARIRANG," A New Era?

**SOOHAN CHO & ELIZABETH QIN**

After a four-year hiatus in the military, BTS is back with another album. "ARIRANG," released on March 20, is BTS's first album as a group since 2022. The album consists of 14 tracks, along with a separate album, "KEEP SWIMMING," which includes different versions of the song "SWIM," the title track of "ARIRANG."

The name Arirang refers to a Korean folk song about separation, love, and reunion. We think that this is a very fitting title for the album, not only because the members of BTS were separated from one another, but because BTS had to leave their fans for military service.

We noticed that throughout this album, BTS has taken on a more experiential approach with their songs. The songs feature various artistic and musical choices that give the album an experiential sound rather than the well-known pop-song feel of their past work. Although the album isn't like the musical vibe we're used to, it seems the members of BTS have developed their own musical styles, with many of them having successful solo careers.

The title track, "SWIM" is calm and reflective, and compared to BTS's past title tracks and lead singles, it is very subtle. The lyrics have an airy feel. The song uses



rhyme at the end of almost every line. However repetitive, the song's theme of moving forward at one's own pace recurs throughout the album. While "SWIM" isn't the most upbeat song, it certainly is a very emotional one that resonates within.

The music video for "SWIM" does a very good job of telling a story and is visually pleasing overall. The video has seamless transitions and the sound of waves that carry us from the intro to the main song, and the camera angles allow viewers to have a smooth, immersive experience of the story.

Some of the album's more

upbeat songs include "FYA," "Alien," and "Body to Body." All of which have rap within the lyrics. "FYA"'s lyrics are fast-paced and rhythm-focused, while "Alien"'s lyrics are disconnected and isolated, and "Body to Body"'s lyrics are more melodic. These songs share themes of societal pressure, freedom, and identity.

One really interesting song on the album is "No.29," which is a completely wordless piece composed solely of meditative noise. The song is 1 minute and 38 seconds long, significantly shorter than the other songs, which average around 3 minutes. We real-

TIFFANIE AN/THE PHILLIPIAN

ly like the inclusion of this song because it serves as an interlude on the album, and over time, the listener can ground themselves and reset their attention after multiple high-energy tracks.

"ARIRANG"'s songs are unique within the K-pop industry, and they resemble those in the Western music industry. As people who listen to a lot of K-pop, we find the album is less emotionally strong than others, but "ARIRANG" is still a great album. Although the album may not resemble BTS's past hits like "Dynamite" or "Butter," it is still very BTS, just evolved and new.

Jacob Shin '29 echoed this statement, pointing to BTS's use of Arirang, the traditional Korean folk melody, as the album's most notable musical choice. However, he felt the album's direction was muddled by its attempt to target two audiences: Korean listeners through familiar melodies, and a more global audience through heavy use of English lyrics.

"I felt it was pretty transparent that they were going for patriotism within Koreans, since it's a traditional Korean melody. But I thought it was counterintuitive for them to also use so much English in their song when they intended for the song to be patriotic. And for me, there's two issues with that. The first is that they were aiming to be patriotic in the first place. Which was super obvious. But also, the second is that if they were going to do that, then they probably shouldn't have used so many English lyrics," said Shin.

This album may not have been the comeback fans were expecting, but it includes multiple songs worth listening to. Shin himself puts it simply. While he wouldn't discourage anyone from listening, Shin voiced how the album had "found at least some success in making the Korean traditional melody known." For fans already familiar with the group, he'd recommend a listen, while he'd point newcomers elsewhere to some of BTS's other successes.

## Style in Bloom: What Accessories are Andover Students Wearing for Spring?

RAMSEY SARKISIAN

As temperatures rise and snow melts, students around campus are shedding their winter coats and snow boots to update their style for the upcoming spring weather. The Phillipian interviewed students to find out what items students across campus are bringing out this term, including gold jewelry, floral patterns, and flip-flops.

### KELLEY MACKINNON '27

"I've retired my boots for my cute shoes with little flowers on them. I've been trying to accessorize my wardrobe with more green [because of] the weather warming up. When the weather warms up it definitely makes me want to look cute and dress in my fun clothes that I don't always get to wear during winter because they're either covered up by coats or they're too summery to wear. I'm just really excited to bring out all my spring clothes and spring accessories. I tend to wear more gold accents in the warmer weather, so I am excited to bring out those and just bring out in general my lighter colors and cuter clothes that I'm not worried about getting dirty in the snow."



### LINDA YUE '29

"I've started wearing more gold rings and gold jewelry in general. I have this pair of really cute cherry earrings that I started wearing more. I like to wear gold in the spring because of the sunny vibe. The weather really affects the way I dress and if it's bright and sunny out, a lot of times I choose to accessorize more or put more effort into how I present myself. I also really like red so I incorporate a lot of red into my outfits as well. It's one of my favorite colors, so I love incorporating small little elements of red here and there in my outfits."

### SHILOH SHARMA '29

"I have started wearing these necklaces recently. I have a couple of them and I also got two of them for my friends. I have one with a heart and an infinity sign, I have one with some hearts, and I also have one with the sun and the moon. I've been wearing more jewelry that I have liked recently. I started wearing rings and I also have these earrings that I always wear. I only wear silver jewelry because I don't think that gold jewelry looks good on me, so it fits that part of my style. I'm excited to continue wearing these earrings of mine, the hook earrings with three purple flowers on them. They're dangly and they're nice, and they're probably one of my favorite physical items that I have of all time."



### LUCY HEYD '26

"Flip-flops are probably my favorite accessory, especially when the weather starts getting warmer. They go with a lot of things like skirts and jeans, and they're just easy to pair with things. I have two pairs that I go between just depending on my outfit and the colors I wanna wear, [and] they're both the brand Havaianas. Especially for the spring, in the warmer weather, I like something less bulky. So, they're pretty applicable to all my different outfits and they are nice and casual. You can wear them with something warmer. You could do jeans and a sweater but then you can also wear them with shorts and a T-shirt. So with the fluctuating weather in the spring, they're a good shoe for that."

## Glitter, Groove, and Control: Harry Styles Experiments with Disco in Kiss All The Time. Disco, Occasionally.

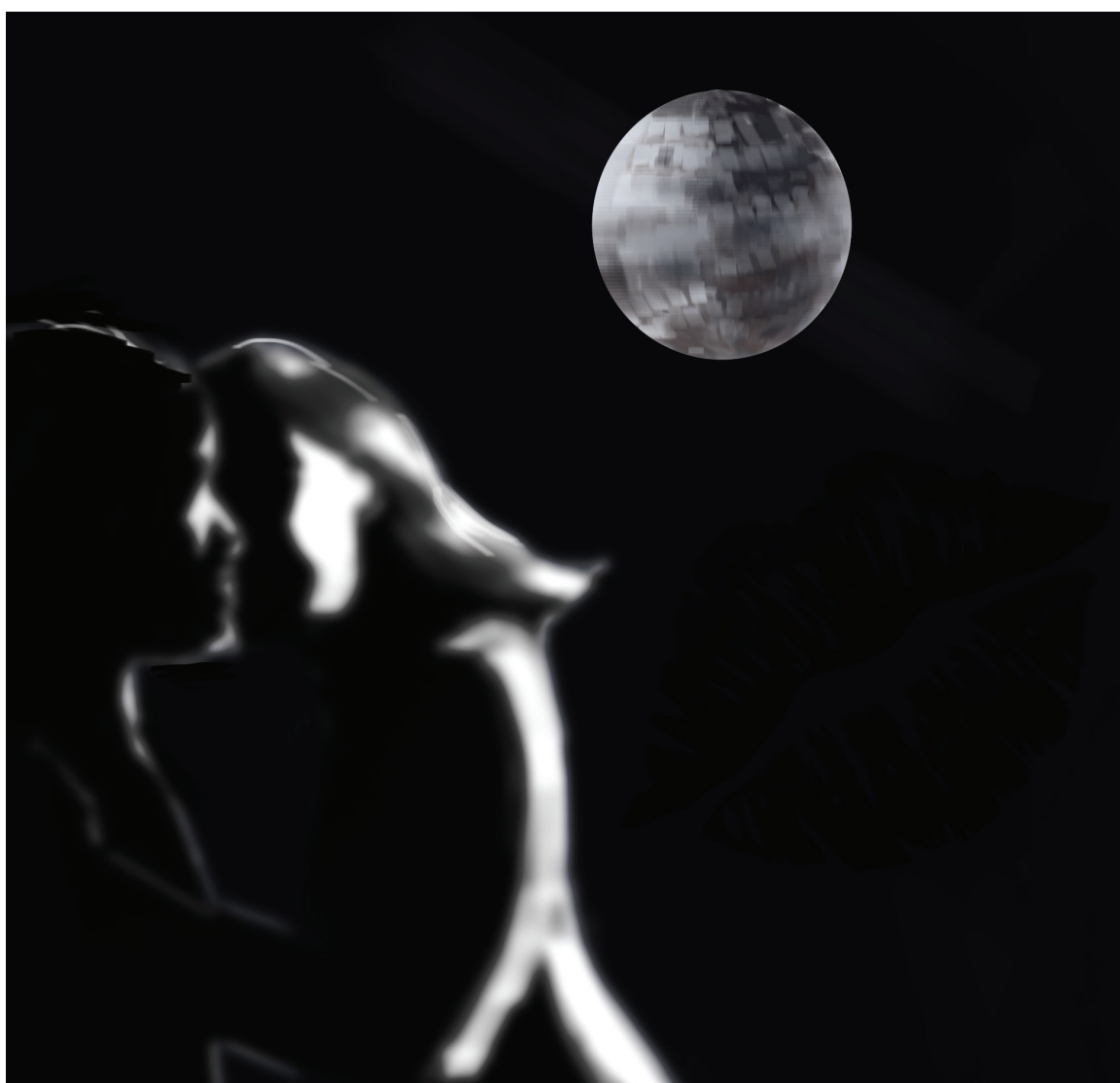
ELIAS JEON & BOSON BAI

Harry Styles released his highly anticipated fourth album called "Kiss All The Time. Disco, Occasionally" on March 6. Known for blending classic rock and soft pop on earlier albums, Styles shifts direction here, building a sound centered on disco-inspired beats, glossy instrumentation, and pure dance-floor energy. The result is an album that feels cohesive and intentional, even if it does not always take risks.

The album's 12 tracks move between disco, synth-pop, and more reflective moments, creating a mix of high-energy grooves and quieter, mood-driven songs. From the opening track, "Aperture," Styles sets the tone with a slow, almost hypnotic build. The song favors mood over energy, layering soft electronic textures and understated vocals. Personally, it feels like an interesting choice for an opener. It draws you in, but it does not fully grab your attention, so the album begins on a quieter note than expected.

The album becomes more engaging as it embraces the energy of disco influences. "American Girls" stands out as one of the most enjoyable tracks, with a warm, infectious groove that feels made for the dance floor. It's not the most original song on the album, but it is one of the most fun. "Ready, Steady, Go!" builds on that energy, with a catchy bass line and present beat. These tracks show that when Styles leans into rhythm and movement, the album begins to suit the disco genre more.

One of the most memorable songs, in my opinion, is "Taste Back." It balances the album's



SHANNON CHISHOLM/THE PHILLIPIAN

atmospheric production with a clearer melody and emotional focus. The layered synths and nostalgic tone make it feel more complete than some of the other tracks. Similarly, "Dance No More" is a highlight because it finally delivers the kind of release that disco is known for. The energy feels less restricted, and the song stands as one of the few moments where the album truly lets go.

However, not every track leaves a strong impression. Songs like "The Waiting Game" and "Pop" blend into the background more than other songs. They are not bad, but they feel repetitive in style compared to other songs, which makes the middle of the album drag slightly. While the consistent sound creates familiarity and identity within the album, it also makes several tracks hard to

distinguish from each other.

There are moments where the album tries to break that pattern. "Season 2 Weight Loss" introduces more experimental production, and "Coming Up Roses" brings in orchestral elements that add emotional depth. I found these tracks refreshing because they offer something different, even though the melody and harmony felt strangely familiar to those

of other artists. "Paint By Numbers" slows things down near the end, creating a softer, more reflective moment, while "Carla's Song" closes the album in a calm, understated way. The ending feels fitting, but not particularly powerful.

The production throughout the album is undeniably strong. Every track is polished, with carefully layered sounds and a clear sense of structure. The basslines are especially effective, consistently driving the music forward. At the same time, I think this level of polish is part of what holds the album back. Disco is meant to feel loose and expressive, and here it often feels too perfect, almost like it is afraid to get messy.

Overall, "Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally" is an enjoyable and well-crafted album that shows Harry Styles experimenting with a new sound. I think it succeeds in capturing the feeling of disco, but not always its full energy. The highlights are genuinely strong, especially when the music becomes more dynamic and expressive, but the album's consistency can also make it feel repetitive.

In the end, this is an album I respect more than I love. It is stylish, cohesive, and easy to listen to, but I wish it took more risks. If Harry Styles had pushed the sound further or allowed more variation between tracks, it could have been something truly unforgettable. Instead, it feels like a polished version of disco that is enjoyable in the moment, even if it does not fully stay with you afterward. After all, the title does say disco, occasionally.

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## Addison Exhibit Highlights Two Overlooked Artists of Geometric Abstraction

JIA-YI ZHI & HAYLEY FAN

The Addison Museum of American Art (Addison)'s newest exhibit, "Both Sides of the Line," features abstract artists Carmen Herrera and Leon Polk Smith. Opened on March 21 on Level 2, Galleries 206-209, the exhibition was curated by Dana Miller, an expert on Carmen Herrera at the University of Michigan Museum of Art, and adapted for the Addison by Rachel Vogel, Assistant Curator and exhibition curator.

According to the Addison's Press Review released on January 15, the first objective of the exhibit is to showcase the art and lives of both artists, whose contributions to the art of geometric abstraction were masked by the industry. Besides their art styles defying traditional abstract aesthetics, Herrera faced discrimination as a Cuban woman; consequently, her art was often relegated to exhibitions highlighting the work of Cuban or female artists. Smith, a gay man born in a Native American territory in Oklahoma, was often overlooked in favor of other male contemporaries.

The showcase reveals the contributions both artists



ALLEGRA LEE/THE PHILLIPIAN

Leon Polk Smith's "Six Involvements in One" (1966) taking the center stage at the Addison Gallery.

made to the art of geometric abstraction, as well as their mutual influence on each other through their friendship. The two met in 1964 while living on the same street in Manhattan, and both drew inspiration from similar people and places. They explored the line in abstract art as a divider of worlds, that drawing one created two different realms on either side. The line often was the subject of their pieces; for example, "Herrera's

Yesterday," which commemorates a friend lost to AIDS, features a single line cutting across the black canvas.

Some students came to the exhibit to find inspiration for their own art. Breanna Ren '29 reflected on her sense of connection to certain pieces in "Both Sides of the Line" and how it played into her artistic process.

"I heard from my [Art-305] teacher that I should see the exhibit because right now we are studying color theory, and I wanted some inspiration for our project... I noticed "Constellation S," "Seven Involvements in One," and "Black Red" [by Leon Polk Smith]. ["Constellation S"] is on the poster at the front of the Addison, [and] I liked it for its composition and contrasting colors. It uses circular canvases and creates an S shape by coloring the space around the line that would define the S shape. I liked "Seven Involvements in One" because it changes depending on the viewer's perspective. One side of it is very bright, and it kind of looks like a bird if you line it up right," said Ren.



ALLEGRA LEE/THE PHILLIPIAN

Two works from Leon Polk Smith's "Constellation Paintings" (left) along with "Rising Red" (1980, right)

Andy Song '29, who also attended the exhibition as required by a class, found the exhibit and its aesthetics different from the conventional art he was accustomed to. Song found himself struck by how interpretive each work was.

"["Constellation S"] and ["OK Territory" by Leon Polk Smith stood out to me]. The whole exhibit was a bit overwhelming, though. Everything was really bright and complicated," said Song.

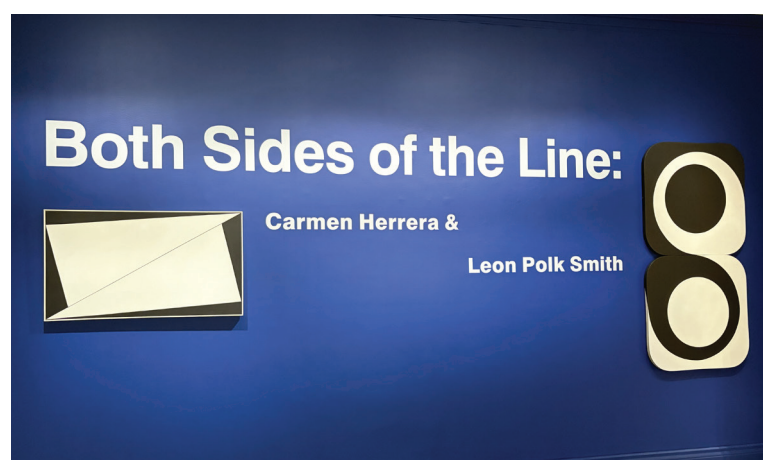
He continued, "This is the second exhibit I've been to, and I didn't have a very strong opinion on it. It was very vibrant compared to the one I went to before. This one was also discombobulated in a way, which was different. The paintings were exhibited together because they shared a common theme and style. The whole aesthetic is both minimalist and over-the-top in the best way possible."

Ren also discussed her thoughts on the exhibit at large, comparing it to other Addison exhibitions she had previously visited.

"This is one of the more abstract exhibitions I've been to. Its meaning is also less obvious, so I felt there was room for interpretation. Honestly, it reminds me of a very specific kind of interior design aesthetic [that] focuses a lot on abstract lines as well... Personally, I didn't like that there were [descriptions] written for the pieces because [they] take away from the personal lens each viewer sees the piece with, especially in abstract art," said Ren.

As a creative arts and French student, Ren drew a connection between the two subjects and the artists' lives.

"I noticed that Herrera uses a lot of Spanish and French in her titles. That surprised me until I learned that she actually went to Paris for a couple of years. I also learned about [her] friendship with [Smith] and the fact that the two were both shortchanged by the arts industry, partially because of aspects of their identity and partly because they didn't follow the abstraction aesthetics of that time," said Ren.



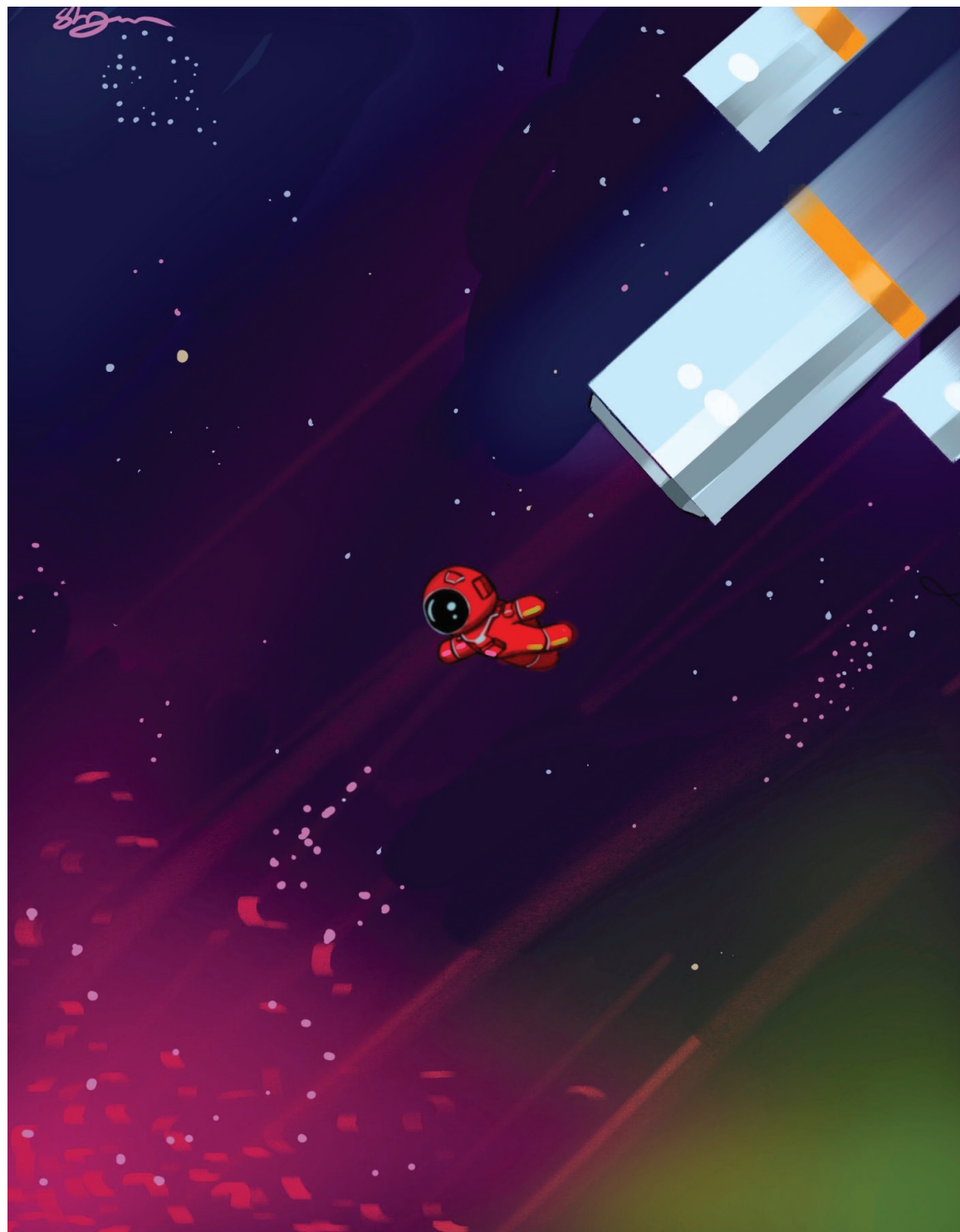
The exhibit's title wall, including the names of the two neighbors and lifelong friends.

## A "Long-Shot" Worth Watching: Project Hail Mary

CHARLIZE SOW

In the wake of "Interstellar" and "The Martian," science fiction films have been held to a daunting standard of innovation and originality, one difficult for new movies in the genre to surmount. "Project Hail Mary," however, has distinguished itself by balancing compelling scientific ideas with an engaging narrative and a sharp sense of humor. Released on March 20, 2026, the film arrived just over a week ago, and yet has already drawn widespread praise, with a score of 95% on Rotten Tomatoes. "Project Hail Mary" follows Ryland Grace (played by Ryan Gosling), a middle school teacher who wakes up on a spacecraft unable to remember his identity or how he got there. As he recovers his memory, he realizes he has been sent on a mission to investigate and stop an unknown micro-organism, Astrophage, that threatens the sun and puts all life on Earth at risk.

As someone interested in biology, extraterrestrial life, and research, I found "Project Hail Mary" especially intriguing to watch. The film delves heavily into the scientific complexities behind the mission, presenting them in an accessible manner that heightens the stakes and makes the premise feel more believable. While many sci-fi movies gloss over the mechanics of their fictional worlds and leave noticeable plot holes, "Project Hail Mary" grounds its story in science, building credibility and deepening the audience's investment. In that regard, the film's commitment to helping the audience understand the plot's logic is one of its most impressive qualities. Even viewers less interested in the technical side will still find plenty to enjoy in its humor, suspense, and emotional resonance.



SHIJUN LI/THE PHILLIPIAN

Beyond its scientific depth, the film also excels in giving us a well-developed protagonist whom audiences can both relate to and root for. As fragments of his memory

arise, Grace is revealed not as a perfect, fairy-tale hero but as a flawed, deeply human character. When Grace is asked to embark on a long-shot mission that will almost

certainly cost him his life, he reacts as most people would: with fear. He is far from a perfect character, and his initial apprehension makes him feel all the more human and relat-

able. His realistic disposition emphasizes that he is able to rise above that fear and carry out the mission with courage, making his journey all the more compelling.

Ryan Gosling was also a strong casting choice for the role. Since so much of the film's appeal lies in its humor, Gosling's charm and comedic delivery allow these lighter moments to land without undermining the story's emotional weight. Throughout the film, his character uses humor constantly, perhaps as an expression of his personality, but also as a way of coping with fear and isolation. This side of him becomes even more pronounced as his friendship with Rocky, an extraterrestrial he encounters in space, deepens. Their bond quickly becomes one of the most touching parts of the film. What starts as an unexpected encounter develops into a friendship rooted in shared survival and mutual understanding. In many ways, Rocky brings out the very best in Grace, and their friendship gives the film much of its emotional impact.

However, while the movie takes great care in developing Rocky and Grace's relationship, it is much less successful in maintaining that same level of attention to its pacing. Though the beginning was strong, the ending felt rushed and somewhat unfinished, leaving certain plot points and questions unexplained. For instance, the film never explains how the ship is ultimately repaired, how Grace ends up living on Erid, or what happens to the people on Earth after the solution is sent back. Still, perhaps some of that uncertainty is part of the point. For a film so invested in science, discovery, and the vastness of the unknown, perhaps the absence of full closure works in its favor, encouraging the audience to sit with uncertainty and, like scientists, remain curious.

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