

Justine Ang Fonte Visits Campus Today for Uppers' and Seniors' EBI

FELIX BRET

This Spring's Equity Balance and Inclusion (EBI) speaker for Uppers and Seniors is Justine Ang Fonte. Fonte is an educator and speaker on sexual education. She will give her talk "Power, People-Pleasing, and Pleasure" today, which discusses the nuances with regard to power and safe, healthy relationships. The talk was organized in partnership with the Brace Center for Gender Studies (Brace).

Fonte has visited Andover several times, having previously worked with the EBI program and Brace. She emphasized the need for discussion, especially at a time in which she views the stakes as elevated due to the mainstream influence of pornography, self-proclaimed online experts, and influencers. However, she explains, not everything is about sex.

"So much of sex education is not about sex. It's about relationships. It's about connection. It's about communication. It's about empathy. You can't address rape culture without addressing all of the much lower-stakes, much more frequent instances of non-consent. That is not emphasized enough in education. It's certainly not practiced in a lot of the spaces we occupy, which is why we are in an era of awareness that there is so much violence," said Fonte.

She continued, "I would want [Andover students] to be able to really look at the many more examples and occurrences in their lives that involve a lack of consent that has nothing to do with sex or sexual relationships. If we can get better in those small, little, much

Continued on A5, Column 1

The 2026-2027 Blue Key Heads Begin Tenure by Charging into Library



KELVIN MA/THE PHILLIPIAN

The 2026-2027 Blue Key Heads are Kosi Udeh '27, Yumi Lai '27, Alastriona O'Donnell '27, Enrique Mercado '27, Gabbie Kawooya '27, Carsen Leach '27, Liz Wodarski '27, Kristian Kearins '27, Oliver Marrero '27, and Jaylen Edmonds '27.

Student Wellness Council Launches Under Leadership of Isaac Owodunni '27 and Hanna Lisauskas '28



COURTESY OF EVAN DEMAYO

Isaac Owodunni '27 (left) and Hanna Lisauskas '28 (right) will serve as the Founding Co-Presidents of the Student Wellness Council.

NIKI TAVAKOLI & SAKETH LINGISETTY

Following a round of applications and interviews earlier this April, Isaac Owodunni '27 and Hanna Lisauskas '28 were named the Founding Co-Presidents of the Student Wellness Council (SWC). The announcement of the co-presidents prefaced a discussion with Josh Steiner '83 during last week's All-School Meeting (ASM).

Guided by founders Evan DeMayo '26 and Anny Wang '26, the pair will begin to transition into their roles and define the council's direction beginning this spring term.

DeMayo spoke on the motivation for founding the SWC.

"[Gracie Aziabor '26], our [2025-2026 Student Body] Co-President and a dedicated founding partner of the SWC, and I had talked many times about forming some kind of wellness task force. But the more I reflected on that framing, the more I realized that a 'task force' implies something temporary... a short-term fix for a long-term challenge. Wellness shouldn't be treated as a passing institutional focus. What we needed was something permanent. A council embedded directly into the school's organizational structure with lasting influence. That distinction became the foundation of what the

SWC is today," wrote DeMayo in an email to *The Phillipian*.

Susan Esty, Dean of Students and Residential Life, recalled the conversations she had with students, including DeMayo, about the installation of netting in Gelb Science Center (Gelb) this Fall. She explained how they were a starting point for student and faculty collaboration towards improving student wellness.

"We met with a group of students to have what was, really, beautifully open dialogue about what was happening. That was a moment where certainly [Caroline Odden, Dean of Studies] and I felt like, 'wow, that was great.' The students said, 'We have some concerns, and we want to talk with you and have you answer some questions.' We were happy to do that. In fact, both of us said, 'Gosh, we should do this more often,' because everybody gets busy and we tend to communicate often through email... having that face-to-face was a pretty defining moment," said Esty.

After drafting an initial concept for the council, DeMayo collaborated with Wang to gather support from student leaders and present their proposal to the administration. DeMayo detailed the challenges faced in advocating for their initiative.

Continued on A5, Column 1

Student-Run Hackathon, GungaHacks, Kicks Off

JOHN KIM & NICCOLO LEE-SUK

The opening ceremony of the first annual GungHacks, a student-run Hackathon funded by an Abbot grant, was held in the Underwood Room last Friday. The competition runs until April 19, with the winners to be announced on April 26 after being judged by a panel of Andover alumni who are experts with technology. Co-organizers of the event consisted of Nathan Egbuna '26, Kachi Ikekpeazu '27, Kwezi Besiimire '26, Fortune Udeh '27, and Asher Egerton-Idehen '26.

GungaHacks tasks participants with solving a current problem on campus. Egbuna, a co-organizer, described the event as a "high speed creation lab." Prior to the ceremony, the organizers hosted

a demo to introduce Artificial Intelligence (AI) coding. Egbuna described a similar demonstration done at Friday's opening ceremony.

"We run [the hackathon] on Devpost, which is the widespread platform for managing hackathons. So we got everyone signed up on that, and then we went through a little demo of how to use some AI tools, since a lot of people think that you need to have a lot of coding experience to do a hackathon, but you really don't, especially in this age... you can create a fully functioning web page with just prompting and AI, without knowing how to code at all," said Egbuna.

Participant Gaven Morales '29 highlighted the promotion

Continued on A5, Column 4

Board of Trustees Appoints Zinterhofer as President, Auguste as Inaugural Vice President



COURTESY OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY. KELVIN MA/THE PHILLIPIAN

Eric Zinterhofer (left) and Christopher Auguste (right) will serve as the president and vice president of the Board of Trustees.

ANGELA GUO

The Board of Trustees announced a historic leadership transition on Tuesday, naming Eric Zinterhofer '89, P'18, '19 as its next president and Christopher Auguste '76, P'09, '12 as its first-ever vice president, both elected unanimously.

The creation of the vice presidency, according to current Board President Amy Falls '82, P'19, '21 in the press release, "was envisioned in the board's recent governance review and which recognizes the increasing complexity and scope of the Academy and its role in global education."

Zinterhofer, a charter trustee since 2016 and cur-

rently serving as Chair of the Head of School Search Committee, will assume the presidency on July 1. He will succeed Falls, who has led the Board since 2019 as its first female president.

Auguste has been a charter trustee since 2019. He has served on the board of the Institute for Recruitment of Teachers and was a member of Andover's 2014 Strategic Planning Task Force, among other advisory roles.

Zinterhofer declined to comment, citing that he will not officially begin his role until the summer. Falls and Auguste could not be reached for comment before deadline.

Josh Steiner '83 Shares Lessons on Mistakes and Failure at ASM

NICCOLO LEE-SUK & WINSTON WU

Joshua Steiner '83 P'17 '19, co-author of "From Mistakes to Meaning: Owning Your Past so it Doesn't Own You" and trustee emeritus, spoke to the Andover community about failure and mistakes at last Friday's All-School Meeting (ASM). Following the ASM, Steiner held a luncheon with students in the Mural Room of Paresky Commons.

At ASM, Steiner discussed his experience within the Whitewater investigations, during which he served as Chief of Staff of the US Department of the Treasury under the Clinton Administration. Steiner discussed his experience of being legally investigated.

"I had a personal diary, I had to turn that over. And in that personal diary, there were all these references to this investigation. My diary

was on the front page of the New York Times, and I was deeply embarrassed. I also turned over letters that I had written to my then-girlfriend, now-wife, which made reference to it," said Steiner.

He continued, "I put [the experience] in a box. I took that box and I hid it someplace psychologically, the darkest, most unavailable place I could get to. I never talked about it. When anyone asked me about it, I made a joke about it, I tried to deflect, I wasn't willing to go along with it. Over time, I realized that process, which is called suppression, is not the right way to do it."

Following this, Steiner emphasized the importance of speaking to others about your mistakes.

"Mistakes are scary. And the way to make fewer of them, and the way to have them be less burdensome, is to talk about them more. And some you've got to talk your mistakes to death. That's the way to kill them. You'll make

fewer of them, and they will carry less weight," said Steiner.

Teddy Blum '29 reflected on the talk's impact on Andover students and the importance of embracing mistakes.

"Sometimes at Andover, students can feel really stressed when they make a big mistake, or even a small mistake. It was very meaningful and very good for Andover students to hear that you can learn from your mistakes and that you shouldn't hide your feelings alone and you should think about them, talk about them if you want to, and then to learn from them," said Blum.

The ASM was held in a Q&A format, with Caroline Odden, Dean of Students, asking Steiner questions. Dr. Kington was not present at the ASM.

Continued on A5, Column 1

Commentary, A2

Andover Gym Culture

The gym culture at Andover should become more inclusive especially towards women and non-athletes.

Eighth Page, A8

Coachella

What a set by Justin Bieber. Or what a terrible set. Who knows.

Sports, B1

Softball Continues Six-Win Streak

With a walkoff win over St. Paul's, Softball moves to 6-0 on the season.

Arts, B8

Singing for School Spirit Glory

Students take the stage in lively Blue Key Head auditions with songs reflecting humor and personality.

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Editorial

The Key to Escaping Your Comfort Zone

Last week, we gathered in lower right of Paresky Commons (Commons) to watch our peers compete for 10 Blue Key Head (BKH) positions. What makes the BKH auditions such a campus attraction? Is it clapping along with our friends over dinner? Watching Uppers painted blue do the worm, chanting BBC (Big Blue Cheer)? There's something about seeing our peers embarrass themselves on their own volition that attracts the masses. But why?

Many of us cannot imagine auditioning to be a BKH. That's part of what's so compelling about watching others do it. We marveled at their mental strength as they led chants and performed impromptu skits about Smurf-ism, Dr. Pepper, Tung Tung Tung Sahur, and more, right before our eyes.

However, while BKH auditions seem like the ultimate opportunity to put oneself out there, there are other, smaller social risks we can take that many of us choose not to. For instance, asking a question at an All-School Meeting (ASM). Sitting alone in Commons. Disagreeing in a group. While we might be secretly interested or excited about making such decisions, we often avoid them due to social pressures that compel us to conform to silence out of fear of embarrassing ourselves. Seeking comfort in refusing to take social risks is safe and common; yet the most memorable and fulfilling experiences come out of rejecting what's comfortable. Doing so prevents true expression and connection, and inhibits our capacity to learn. We should aim,

then, to step outside of our comfort zones by believing in ourselves and being unafraid of embarrassment.

Think about the moments that you're most proud of, whether they're scoring the winning goal or finally understanding a concept you've been stuck on for days. These moments, even if they're small, often reflect a willingness to take a risk. To trust yourself to go for the goal is a risk, and so is reaching out to a teacher for help. While we might not think that we are necessarily 'risk-takers' day-to-day, our accomplishments often demonstrate that quality. And even more fortunately for us, there are ways to continue doing the uncomfortable and strengthen that muscle.

As we reminisce about our daring peers' auditions and watch the new BKHs take over the paths with blaring music and beautiful blue outfits, let's take some inspiration from them. They took a risk, and we should too.

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

Andover's Gym Has Failed Women

SIMRAN SHAH



COURTESY OF SIMRAN SHAH

Have you ever tried to go to the gym at Andover? Last week, I did, wearing a tank top and shorts that seemed to be the comfortable choice at first, especially as I got to the gym and saw barely anyone there. Usually, I would do ab exercises in the cardio room, but today, as it was less busy, I set my mat up near the windows by the squat racks. Within five minutes, a guy asked his friend to come spot him and moved his bench closer to my mat. His friend even asked him repeatedly why he was moving uncomfortably close to my friend and me rather than anywhere else in the empty gym, but the guy insisted. He ended up doing hip thrusts right next to my face, and I felt so disgusted that I sat up and turned away until he was done. He left soon after, but the interaction threw off the rest of my workout. I told my friends about it, and they agreed that the gym always felt exclusive. One thing is clear: Andover gym culture needs to shift to be more inclusive and welcoming to women.

A gym anywhere can be a daunting place. However, try the gym at our school, right after Athletic Development Training (ADT) finishes, and you still can't find an open place at the machines, squat rack, or anywhere really. The first issue with our gym is that there isn't enough space. Varsity athletes and their training often dominate the gym space. This is absolutely understandable, considering they need time to maintain their physical



NATHAN WU / THE PHILLIPIAN

performance; however, it can act as a detriment to other gym-goers who were told the gym was accessible. In my experience, the gym is supervised by trainers or coaches who seem to know the athletes; often, everyone is chatting, and the teams are controlling the music, which makes the entire space seem like something you're intruding on rather than something you're a part of.

Another aspect to consider is the way men dominate the gym space. One of the foundational ideas of the patriarchy is that men are biologically physically stronger than women. The common attribution of strength to masculinity often means the ambience of any gym can lean very male-centered. Though I've learned to look inward and focus on my own personal goals, this can be very deterring to new gym-goers, especially women, who may already feel out of place in a male-driven environment. In my experience, as well as other people I've talked to, including female athletes, the Borden Memorial Gym (Borden) is extremely male-dominated first, and athlete-dominant second. I almost never see groups of girls from the same varsity sport training

together recreationally, whereas the opposite goes for guys.

Another one of my observations of the issues as a girl in the gym is feeling self-conscious. I mean this in two ways. Firstly, a woman is more prone to being self-conscious about her body, and rather than attending the gym to feel good, be healthy, or train for a sport, it is often about aesthetics. I myself am a victim of that. Women often associate the gym with weight loss rather than muscle gain and are therefore more present in the cardio room. Due, once again, to the patriarchy, women tend to be afraid of muscle and looking too masculine so as not to ruin their appeal. I personally hate cardio, but still found myself fleeing to the cardio room to find calm and quiet amidst the overwhelming masculinity of the lifting room. It is there that I saw most of the girls who happened to be there. Secondly, a woman is also prone to being self-conscious about gym clothes. Due to objectification, women worry about how they look while working out and if they should "cover up." Especially in a gym that is always occupied by men like ours, it can be even more uncomfortable and even deter girls from going.

Here are my proposed solutions to Andover's gym structure. First, to avoid exclusivity, our gym shouldn't be split into cardio and strength, but instead be split into a recreational gym and a sports gym. They should still remain fluid, so that any athlete can still use the rec gym in their spare time. However, if they are specifically training, whether it be an unofficial captain's practice or the entirety of the Strength and Conditioning group, they should use the sports gym, so that the rec gym becomes more of a diverse space on campus, and newcomers can feel more welcome. I don't think anyone should stop training as much as they are and having as much fun with their teammates, but I do think the centrality of the gym to these sports can be very intimidating, especially to women. My second solution is something I've spoken to my friends, teachers, and house counselors about several times. I think that there should be a day each week or month where the gym is typically less busy anyway, and it should be converted to an all-female gym for that day. This is to allow women to be more comfortable in their choice of clothing, whether for religious reasons or not, and

feel more supported. Typically, this idea of an area designated for a single group can be tricky. However, these types of spaces are legally supported in Massachusetts because anti-discrimination laws handle sex slightly differently. Having this time every so often would invite so many new girls to the gym, and hopefully, they can realize they have support in these spaces, even when they do seem alone. I think encouraging female newcomers to try strength training as well as cardio would be a focus, and even having a pilates class running during the hours of the event might be helpful. In practice, these events may not be as feasible with getting administrative approval, and it would be extremely dependent on student-body feedback. The complex and multifaceted concept of gender may also be difficult for non-conforming student, and the line between training "for a sport" and "normal strength training" is very arbitrary.

All in all, I feel that our current gym culture hasn't felt entirely inclusive or safe to me. My wish for my next years at Andover is to implement solutions like the ones written about above to change this. If you are someone new to the gym or if you want to start working out, regardless of what you've heard about gym culture here, please try it out. I was that person who was deathly scared of the training room, but also desperately wanted to do strength training. Fear should never beat out curiosity, and isolation should never take the place of community. If you are a girl who uses our Andover gym now, I want you to know you are not alone, and come say "hi" if you ever see me. It is my hope that Andover's vibrant and diverse community starts to rear its head a little more in the recreational fitness spaces on campus, because exercising every day is key to a healthy life, which every student deserves.

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

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CORRECTIONS:

In the Arts section of the April 10, 2026 issue, Gavin Shryoc's last name is spelled as such, not Shyro. The Phillipian regrets these errors.



AGLAIA HONG / THE PHILLIPIAN

When Profit Eclipses Non Sibi

WOOJIN OH



J. NUÑEZ / THE PHILLIPIAN

In March 2026, the Los Angeles court found Meta and Google's YouTube liable for harming a teenage girl through an intentionally addictive platform. The girl, referred to as K.G.M. in the lawsuit, had begun using YouTube at age six and Instagram at age nine. Over time, her use of these platforms led to addiction, depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. She sued, arguing that social media platforms, with their toxic design, amplified her struggles. The jury agreed and ordered Meta and Google to compensate six million dollars in damages. The verdict was monumental in becoming the first case where social media companies were judged guilty for how they designed their platforms. With over 2,000 similar lawsuits waiting to be addressed, this case sets the expectation of how currently pending, and future cases will play out. However, a six million dollar verdict against two of the world's greatest tech giants seems almost negligible. So how can we prevent similar cases in the future and protect the ideals of *Non Sibi* in the realm of profit and enterprise?



CAMILA CHEN / THE PHILLIPIAN

Usually on a day to day basis, people display relatively stable values of morals. People usually don't seek to intentionally hurt children by designing malicious platforms that damage their mental health. However, the situation changes when put in context of financial motivation. Not minor tens or hundreds of dollars, but billions. When such enormous rewards are at hand, an instinctive response might prioritize personal benefit and neglect the consequences on others. Similar examples can be seen throughout history. For decades, tobacco companies internally recognized the addictive and harmful nature of their product, yet continued marketing it, even targeting children. It probably wasn't that these company executives produced the tobaccos with the active,

evil desire to harm children. Sometimes, financial motivation or personal greed can dangerously recalibrate one's moral compass.

The verdict against Meta and YouTube is undoubtedly significant. It sets a legal precedent that signals to similar companies of the possibility of consequences. But courts are only reactive. They respond to harm after an event or crime has already happened. It can't prevent addiction, depression, or other harms after they have already impacted the victim. Furthermore, companies like Meta and Google generate hundreds of billions in annual revenue. A six million dollar verdict is not enough to make these companies change. As long as the profit from their addictive design exceeds the cost of punishment,

there is no practical incentive for these business models to change. This is the challenge of righteousness — *Non Sibi* — in the real-world. The motto encourages to live not for oneself, but for others. However, the world operates exactly the opposite way; the selfish often thrive.

Acknowledging that people tend to bend toward billion-dollar incentives, the answer cannot stop at criticizing the companies but must go further to reshape the incentives themselves. The first step is rethinking how penalties are structured. While a one-time six million dollar reparation may not sway the tech giants, ways of disincentivizing toxic ways of profit could work. Fines proportionalized to revenue, say 10 percent of annual income, can

create a financial consequence that is actually impactful. The second is mandatory design inspections. Independent, external reviews of the harmful features like those that the Los Angeles court found can prevent these harmful platforms from being released in the first place. Aside from these, there are plenty of other possible policy suggestions. Regardless, the most important central idea that all of them share is making the harmful choice the expensive choice, so that human nature, which often follows incentives, follows the path that doesn't harm society.

The verdict in Los Angeles was impactful. But a jury and judge in one courtroom cannot restructure an economic system that has already deeply rooted itself. The six million dollars awarded to K.G.M. wouldn't have been a heavy blow on the financial status of Meta or Google. And the 2,000 pending lawsuits, even if they all succeed, would have to be dealt with case by case, all the while continuing to damage individuals outside the courtroom. The deeper issue remains: as long as the rewards favor harm, harm will continue. To protect the ideal values of *Non Sibi* and prevent it from being eclipsed by temptations of high profit, we cannot only ask whether these companies are good or bad. We must address whether we as individual people are willing to build systems that make choosing *Non Sibi* the economically rational choice — not just the moral one.

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

The Architecture of Addiction

MUAZ REZA



COURTESY OF MUAZ REZA

On March 26, 2026, Meta and Google were found liable for inflicting harm on a then-minor's mental health through the design of their scrolling algorithm, awarding the plaintiff six million dollars in damages. Lawyers in the case emphasized that "features of Instagram, such as the infinite scroll, were designed to be addictive". In addition, they argued that "the company wanted young users because they were more likely to stick with its platforms for longer stretches of time." The specificity contributed to the lawyers' victory; they proved Meta and Google methodologically implemented features specifically designed for teen exploitation. Both companies involved have announced plans to appeal the decision. But the story is not over yet. Somewhere in Silicon Valley, a team of lawyers is already planning on arguing that the teenager's mental unraveling was, fundamentally, her own fault.

There's no doubt this verdict is a landmark. It establishes a precedent in the judicial sys-

tem that social media can no longer hide behind the guise of neutrality regarding their algorithm. Designs are, after all, an intentional choice. The infinite scroll system was intentionally designed to keep teenagers addicted to the social media platform to maximize the company's profits. It's correct, then, to hold social media companies liable for the harm they cause.

In that way, however, Google and Meta's appeal is not solely a legal move, but rather a moral referendum on how large companies operate. They will most likely argue that their platforms protected speech, that all users consented to their algorithm, and the correlation between social media use and mental health is not necessarily causal. These arguments do hold some merit: for example, it's nearly impossible to equate poor mental health in an entire generation of teenagers to simply an Instagram notification. However, this does not serve as a blanket defense against negligence. Take, for example, tobacco companies in the 20th century, who hid behind the complexity of cancer research, rather than acknowledging the direct link between smoking and cancer. This cycle of deniability is not new.

Furthermore, the companies involved in the lawsuit have evidence that goes against their argument. Meta's researchers warned that Instagram was harmful to teenage girls' self-image and mental health. Young men are desensitized to unrealistic body standards set by "fitness" influencers cham-



SOPHIA KIM / THE PHILLIPIAN

pioning unsustainable living habits. Yet, despite this finding, minimal was done to remedy the issue. Internal employees within the company are actively raising alarms, yet they are being ignored in favor of profit and growth. Thus, the excuse of "we didn't know" or "it cannot be proven" is not a credible defense.

As I was reading through the case and trying to understand all the details, I kept circling back to a simple question: "What exactly are these companies pursuing?" Social media giants like Instagram and Snapchat are marketed as the ideal way to connect with the world, through features such as the like button, the stories format, or the repost function. However, I find this to be partially an illusion. Yes, if used correctly, the positive effects of belonging and community-building can be found using social media. However, there is a large portion of users who do the opposite, who

are bombarded with content that promotes their insecurity, anxiety, and comparison. This is by design: fear and compulsion are, neurologically, more stimulating than contentment. Thus, while social media companies emphasize connection as the main purpose of their apps, user retention and engagement are intricately built into the system.

So, when the question of whether addiction is the user's responsibility or the company's, I find that framework to be limiting in scope. When dealing with other forms of addiction — say, gambling — it's not a question of whether the decor at a casino, the carpet patterns, the lighting, is what keeps people at the table. We do not ask if an opioid addiction is the patient's fault when pharmaceutical companies knowingly overstated the drug's safety. The simple presence of agency should not absolve social media companies from responsibility, particularly when there is an abundance

of evidence that the users' addiction is systematically engineered and methodologically implemented by them.

In addition, it's important to understand the significance of the issue of those involved. Teenagers are not somehow uniquely weak-willed — after all, I'm willing to bet everyone knows a grandparent or two addicted to YouTube Shorts. However, teenagers are, by nature, more vulnerable because the regions in their brains that regulate impulse control and long-term decision-making skills are still being developed. Companies build scrolling algorithms that directly exploit that vulnerability, while simultaneously ignoring the stark consequences. The argument that "kids should have just logged off" is by no means a defensible position — it's negligence framed as a strategic defense.

Though the March 26 verdict will not immediately change the social media landscape, the precedent it sets is significant. More cases will follow this one, as will more research reinforcing the scrolling algorithm's detrimental effect to adolescent development. However, the hope is that, as legal cases gain more public exposure and society becomes cognizant of social media among the youth, practical policy changes will follow.

Muaz Reza is an Upper from Santa Monica, Calif. Contact the author at mreza27@andover.edu

For Whose Freedom?

ANDREW PARK



E. CHAI / THE PHILLIPIAN

On February 28, amid rising tensions between the US and Iran, the United States and Israel shocked the world by directing air raids against Iran's government compound, assassinating Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Also known as the "Supreme Leader," Khamenei had been ruling since 1989, transforming the preliminary establishment that enacted the 1979 Iranian Revolution into a highly authoritarian, militarized state. The strike was in response to failing negotiations on Iran's nuclear capabilities and its regional power. After the assassination, President Trump addressed the Iranian people, saying that "the hour of your freedom is at hand" and to "take over your government". Freeing the Iranian people from their theocratic regime is a decades-long development since the Iranian Revolution, with regime change being the current initiative. However, on a larger scale, this process of regime change will not contribute to liberation, but would lead to a catastrophic vacuum of power for the Iranian people, a continuation of a humanitarian crisis in the wider region, and many Americans losing their own freedoms in democracy.

The biggest logical fallacy is that the Iranian political system isn't based on voting rights, which renders a democratic



HARRY ZHOU / THE PHILLIPIAN

transition nearly impossible and widens the vulnerability of the freedom of the Iranian people. Due to this quality of Iran's political system, the government does not need to worry about political dissent. In fact, we saw this dynamic in action earlier this year, where a death toll in

The irony of not voting for the war and paying for its tolls is not democracy nor personal freedom.

the thousands and mass arrests resulted after tens of thousands protested across the country due to well-being issues and oppression. However, regime change in the United States depends on citizens rising and taking control of the government, which doesn't seem likely when the fundamental system is locked out and inclined to respond with violence.

Theoretically, this violence

would most definitely worsen at the hands of Iran's militant force, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). This paramilitary force works side by side with the Iranian authority to aid in suppression, like the operations against early January. If a top-down regime change were in effect, the IRGC, with hundreds of thousands of active and reserve militants across Iran's provinces, would continue to enact the central government's wishes. Additionally, this regime change would potentially create a power vacuum that the IRGC could take advantage of. In this hypothetical, the balkanization of Iran would lead to much more oppression, with the power of judge, jury, and executioner being held by regional warlords. The already minuscule freedoms of Iranians would dwindle as the IRGC monitors every single part of one's life, continuing their targeting of "others" in Iranian society.

Secondly, while not the original targets of the United States and Israel, millions of citizens have been caught in the crossfire of the war. On February 28, during the initial strikes, an Ameri-

can miscalculation reduced a girls' school to rubble, claiming the lives of 165 students and staff. While this may be addressed as "collateral" in the larger war, we must question if this is truly a path for freedom for the Iranian people. Why must children be in the crossfire if the true goal is removing the leaders of government? If the conflict leads to this kind of suffering and casualties, I do not think it is genuinely for the people of Iran.

While the strikes were traded between Iran and the U.S.'s allies, Israel reignited conflicts with Hezbollah because of its ties to the IRGC. Sending legally dubious displacement orders to southern Lebanon, Israel positioned the most recent operation to root out the militia. As of now, more than one million Lebanese people have been displaced, while only a few hundred thousand can reasonably take refuge inside Lebanon. To the displaced people of Lebanon, especially those not affiliated with Hezbollah, this is an egregious deterioration of their lives, their freedom to live where they have lived for many years. We cannot promote the freeing of Iranians

from oppression while our allies displace over a million Lebanese civilians.

Finally, the conflict greatly affects all of us, whether we wanted this war or not. According to a recent Pew Research survey, around six out of 10 Americans disapprove of this war. Despite this wide distaste, all Americans have to deal with rising oil prices. Furthermore, around \$28 billion has been used in the past month by the Pentagon, which could have been used to support nationwide infrastructure. If we want to project a true beam of freedom to the global world, we should also practice that within our own nation. It cannot be freedom for the average American who is being forced to pay rising oil costs, and for a war they don't support. The irony of not voting for the war, and paying for its tolls, is not democracy nor personal freedom.

As Andover students, we often take complex global situations as just intellectual puzzles to solve, especially from our perspective of extreme peace and comfort. However, conflicts deal with genuine lives at the line, and we have a responsibility to care for lives as well as geopolitical objectives. Additionally, while it is simple to think that removing oppressors can restore freedom, there is always potential for the overthrow to lead to worse situations, and there must be a more comprehensive view of the situation. True global citizenship requires us to question not just who is being freed, but the consequences of the action and whether our definitions of freedom align with the reality of those on the ground.

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How and When Is It Better to Cut Someone Off?

EMMA HONG



K. TOMALA / THE PHILLIPIAN

At what point does protecting your peace become eschewing certain difficult relationships? Obviously, cutting people off should not be a first or immediate response to conflict, but there are undeniably moments when preserving trust and self-respect matter more than preserving the relationship. That being said, in communities as close and dense as Andover, "cutting people off" is rarely a clean notion. This tension makes the question far more complex than the language of boundaries of self-preservation suggests in isolation.

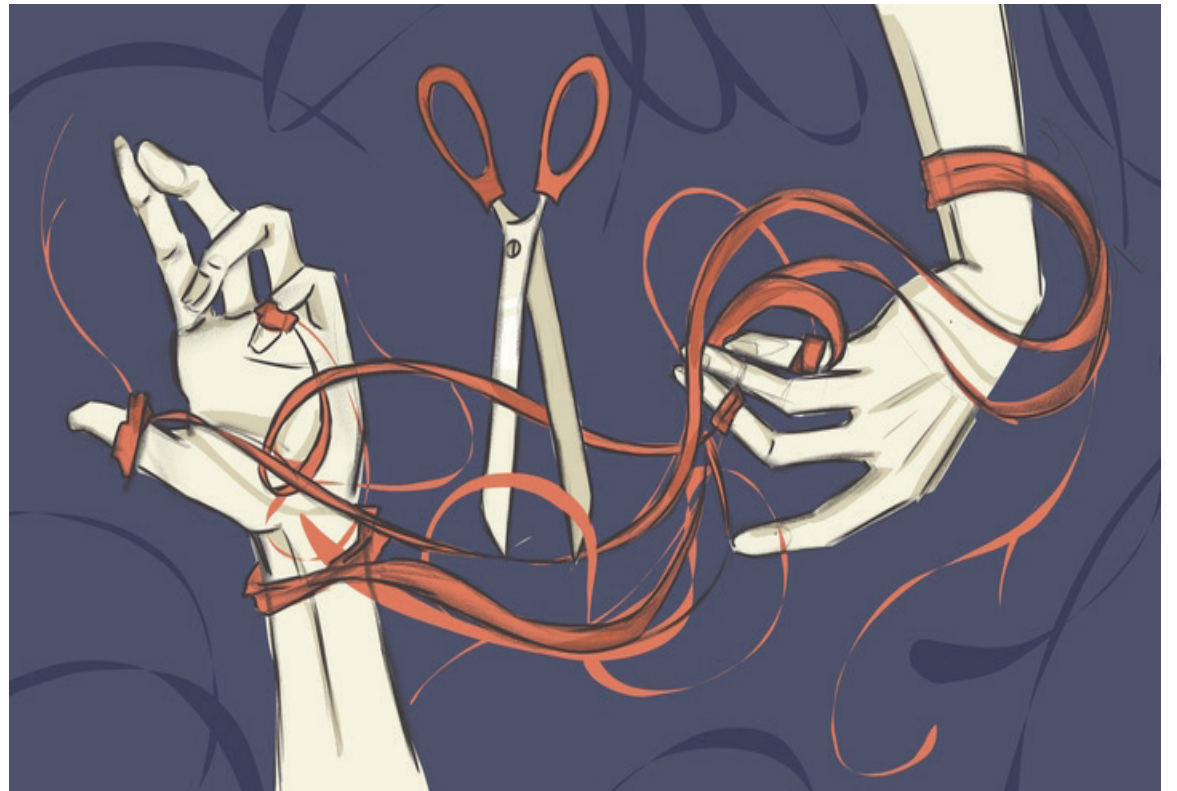
While it's implausible and illogical to set definitive lines for exactly when and how to cut someone off, a reasonable benchmark is when you have already clearly communicated that something hurt you — and the other person continues to cross that line you communicated. There is no tangible reason to put up with someone repeatedly mocking your feelings and not respecting time, space, pressuring you into things, ignoring expressed limits. Of course anyone can make a mistake — but a mistake post communication for a certain offense is plainly disrespectful — in my opinion, enough to cut someone off if you are sufficiently hurt. Furthermore, when someone

is actively harming your mental or emotional wellbeing on a regular or repeated basis—the cost of preserving this relationship is now exceeding its value. When your emotional stability is being consistently undermined, protecting your peace becomes legitimate. You should not have to deal with constant drama, emotional manipulation, or feeling drained after every interaction—when you simply: could not. Especially when a relationship is beginning to make you feel unseen or force you to erase parts of yourself. One of the most prominent reasons to distance yourself from someone is undeniably when staying close to them requires you to become a smaller version of yourself or someone you don't like as much as you do your regular self. When you feel the need to change your personality to avoid conflict or censor your thoughts, the problem can become not active harm but the quiet way a relationship sometimes pressures you to edit yourself into someone more convenient.

Additionally, relationship often become rooted in more

When someone is actively harming your mental health or emotional wellbeing on a repeated or regular basis—the cost of preserving this relationship is now exceeding its value.

competition than care — especially at a prep school such as Andover — from being wrapped in such a high pressure environment. At this point, distance



CARINA PAIK / THE PHILLIPIAN

becomes an act of self-preservation rather than cruelty. When you notice someone only values access — the benefit of your presence — more than they value you as a person, that relationship becomes unsustainable as soon as one person begins to value what the other provides more than who they are.

Now, of course the immediate question is — how do you cut someone off? Before severing contact, you need to define what's acceptable in your interactions. Decide comprehensively which behaviors you will no longer tolerate — gossip, manipulation, disrespect — and communicate boundaries when possible: "I can't continue spending time when this keeps happening." Boundaries, as simple as they sound, signal that this is about self-respect, not revenge. Of course, as aforementioned, when these boundaries do not suffice even when clearly and vocally communicated, you can slowly create natural distance while minimizing conflict or

gossip by gradually moving away. Rarely can you go from close friends to zero contact instantly. Small, consistent steps work better and are socially safer in such a tight community. Slowly begin to reduce communication, avoid initiating plans but respond politely if necessary. Shift focus to other friendships or activities.

That being said, avoid oversharing about the breakup with mutual friends. Stay cordial in public. And keep your narrative focused on your needs—again, emphasize that this is about self-respect, not revenge or hatred or anything external. If possible, try to merely redefine the relationship to the point at which you feel comfortable—sometimes you don't need to erase someone completely. Just recalibrate expectations, and in doing so maybe you move from close friend to acquaintance, or simply engage in group settings only to avoid one-on-one time. In a nuanced way, this keeps your life manageable without

escalating drama or creating enemies.

Ultimately, cutting someone off is not and does not have to be about a single moment of hurt or even a big, theatrical confrontation. It is simply about recognizing the cumulative impact a relationship has on your trust, emotional wellbeing, or sense of self. Protecting your peace does not mean avoiding difficulty altogether: it means choosing which relationships are nourishing and which are eroding. Especially in close-knit, high-pressure communities like Andover, the act of distancing yourself requires both thoughtfulness and courage, balancing your own needs with the realities and nuances of shared spaces and social networks.

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Recent ASM Deviates from Traditional Speech Format

Continued from A1, Column 3

Chloe Song '26 commented on the style of the ASM, noting that the format had been done at previous alumni panels.

"In the past I found [the format] engaging, and I also found it engaging this time around as well, because I also think people know [Dean] Odden, and their dynamic was funny. And so it's different from a presentation. When you just present by yourself, there's not the aspect of another person creating a dynamic, but when there's another person asking you questions, you get to see maybe their more

personable side better," said Song.

After speaking with Odden, Steiner took questions from students, including Jacob Gruneich '27. Gruneich explained why he asked Steiner about leadership.

"As an upperclassman, I'm thinking, how can I leave a mark as a leader on campus? And I'm starting to think about my time after Andover and I'm trying to learn how to be not only a leader, but an impactful leader who's actually focused and addressing things that actually matter in society. That's why I asked that question specifically," said Gruneich.

Though Rachel Levitsky '28 also appreciated Steiner's talk, she mentioned that his lessons

may not always be applicable at Andover.

"I liked how he spoke about failure in a way that Andover students could understand. Instead of speaking too formally, he utilized his humor to make his message stick on a deeper level. With a lot of internal pressures like other students, and external pressure, like colleges or teachers, it's not super realistic to embrace every mistake we make. It's usually difficult for students to see beyond the scope of a mistake. [For example,] if you get a bad grade it's hard to see anything beyond that, especially in the moment," said Levitsky.

GungaHacks Organizers Share Hopes for Future Expansions

Continued from A1, Column 4

of using AI tools as a key part of the contest. Morales mentioned that this shortens the tedious work required to form the code used for making his app.

"One of the main parts of GungaHacks is it's completely AI friendly, so you can use any AI that you want with no restrictions at all. So it [puts more value] on the idea and your thought process over your ability to code, which has always been historically the restricting factor of people who can and create web apps," said Morales.

Ikekpeazu, a co-organizer, focused on logistics. He explained some difficulties with booking Underwood for Friday's event. Ikekpeazu highlighted the contributions of Nicholas Zufelt, the faculty advisor for the event.

"We were kind of in a scramble. Initially, we wanted Kemper for the opening ceremony, [but] Kemper wasn't available. So we really scrambled between Freeman or Underwood Room and in discussions with Dr. Zufelt and Mr. Capano, they thought it would be best that we do it in Underwood," said Ikekpeazu.

He continued, "This was mainly [a] student run [event]. But without Dr. Zufelt, we wouldn't have been able to do anything. He got in contact with Underwood. He also got in contact with Kemper, things that students don't really know how to do on the outset. But in terms of logistical things and how we wanted to run it, Dr. Zufelt kind of took the backseat, allowing us to have our creative freedom."

GungaHacks differs from standard hackathons in its two-week duration and demo video submission format. Participant Alfonso Gonzalez-Cano '27 explained these differences, and expressed some concerns regarding them.

"Usually, these hackathons are a day long. You just stay in overnight and work on it, and

that's part of the fun. Just having that pressure and working through the night with your friends and doing this really hard thing together. Personally, I do kind of wish it was a regular hackathon format, but I don't mind the new format," said Gonzalez-Cano.

He continued, "As opposed to submitting a GitHub repository or presenting in front of a panel of judges, it's an online submission where you submit a pitch video. My only gripe with it is that it's really easy for someone to just make a false demo and then just submit that, and the judges really have no way to gauge whether the website actually works."

Morales predicted greater participation of GungaHacks if the hackathon continues to be held on a regular basis. He noted that having more exposure to tech and AI would be beneficial to students at Andover.

"I hope [GungaHacks] expands to more students too because AI education is something that basically everywhere in the world kind of lacks. If students learn how to use it the correct way via a hackathon, that it can benefit not just their results in the hackathon, but their future and career placement," said Morales.

Ikekpeazu shared the plans of the co-organizers to build a larger team after some of them graduate.

"What we're going to be doing this spring and next fall is building an official team for GungaHacks. This year it was kind of crude. We kind of scrambled together. Our initial Abbot Grant this year was for a thousand, we're trying to ramp up that number [next year]. So maybe we can pay some keynote speakers to come on campus and it'll just be a big thing that we hope will live past our 10 years at Andover," said Ikekpeazu.

Editor's note: Kachi Ikekpeazu is a Business Manager for The Phillipian.

Students Give Opinions on Fonte's Past Controversies

Continued from A1, Column 2

more frequent instances, we are going to be better, and we're going to be well-practiced for the higher stakes situations that are a lot more intimate."

The EBI program is structured for 11th and 12th-graders to have a speaker meeting once a term, along with events throughout the term. In previous years, the system consisted of forty-five-minute weekly meetings. Taylor Ware P '25 '26, Head of EBI for 11th and 12th graders, explains why this is.

"We felt that uppers and seniors had a lot of demands on their time. Rather than having, you know, seven 45-minute periods a term, it could be more effective to use the speaker and event-based program. So, for example, the Upper Carnival is scheduled for this Friday, right after our speaker. So that's one of the events I get to

throw, which I love," said Ware.

Ware gives additional insight into the selection process for EBI speakers, who are chosen by the Speakers Committee, which consists of adults, including those within the Dean of Students Office, within Brace, alongside Director of Alumni Engagement Jenny Savino, Chief Communications Officer Tracy Sweet, and ASM Coordinator Reverend Gina Finocchiaro.

"Speakers are chosen in conjunction with the Speakers Committee. It's a big group of adults on campus. We're thoughtful about who the different speakers coming in are, whether it's ASM or class speakers, to make sure we're offering a broad range of views and topics and that kind of thing. EBI speakers are chosen for the way they fit into the EBI umbrella," said Ware.

Fonte's work has previously generated some controversy, with an alleged incident occurring at the Dalton School in 2021, where

she worked for nine years. Some Andover students were there at the same time as she was, such as Hugo Appen '27, who was in sixth grade.

"All my friends were talking about [her leaving], and it was a crazy moment... They were claiming that she got fired because she was apparently teaching inappropriate things to first graders. One person said it was, she was teaching them about pornography or something," said Appen.

He continued, "I understand that sex ed is necessary, even for young kids, because you don't want them to be getting sexually abused. But in the case of pornography, I don't really think that's something you need to be teaching to a young kid, because that's not really something they're gonna be interacting with, and that's not something that would happen to them, even if that was a case where they were in an unsafe situation."

Owodunni and Lisauskas Describe Goals and Future Initiatives for the SWC

Continued from A1, Column 3

"One of the most significant challenges was simply finding the confidence to believe in our idea enough to propose it to prominent adults at a school as large and well-established as Andover. As students, it can be difficult to feel that your voice carries weight in institutional conversations, and there were moments where that self-doubt was real. That said, once we brought the proposal forward, the support we received from adults on campus was nothing short of extraordinary. Faculty and administrators embraced the idea with an enthusiasm that exceeded anything we could have hoped for," wrote DeMayo.

Owodunni described his previous experiences advocating for student wellness, explaining how

they motivated him to apply for SWC Founding Co-President.

"Its mission of fighting stigma around mental health at our school was really the deciding factor for me. I did similar work at my previous school in Houston[, Texas], where I founded an organization called Students Stopping Stigma that united several private schools in the Houston area to work together to combat stigma around mental health in their respective communities. So when I saw this, it was like, this is what I'm familiar with. I really respected Evan and Anny for taking the time to make this initiative. Even though they won't be here to benefit or see it through, I thought it was really admirable, and I wanted to be a part of it," said Owodunni.

Owodunni elaborated on his vision for the SWC as an opportunity to normalize conversations around mental health on campus

and improve the accessibility of Andover's wellness-related resources.

"Our goal is to facilitate more discussions happening around mental health. It's something that we can talk about here. I hope that through my initiatives, Sykes will feel more accessible and less [so as if] mental health counseling or treatment is a foreign thing. Mental health is part of one's health, and I want Andover students to know that... We're going to encourage student leaders to be open and have discussions around mental health so that when people see that the people they look up to, their prefects, their proctors, their cluster presidents, being open and talking about mental health, they will feel more comfortable doing so, so that we can have a more open and supportive campus for students," said Owodunni.

Building on Owodunni's points, Lisauskas shared her ex-

periences with mental health at Andover. She explained how the SWC aims to incorporate them into future initiatives, including mental health response training for student leaders.

"As someone who has seen her best friends struggle with mental health and been there herself sometimes, it's really important to feel like you have other students who are there to support you. It can be really hard to take it upon yourself to go to an adult and be like, I need help... Being part of something that helps people, reduces stigma around mental health first, and then also helps people know how to respond in those situations so that everybody stays safe, is really important," said Lisauskas.

Devin O'Reilly, Director of Athletic Training and advisor for the SWC, expressed appreciation for the council's initiatives. He encouraged students to actively find

ways to contribute to the goals the SWC is working towards.

"Evan and Anny are tremendous, and they're doing a lot of work in their last few months at Andover. A lot of it is adults with hands-off. It's all student-run. As adults, we're there to support the ideas and shape them to try to get them into fruition. [It's] mostly an advisory role, and inspired by how much strength and willpower the student body, especially Evan and Anny, have to bring this to life, which is really cool to see," said O'Reilly.

O'Reilly continued, "Students should feel encouraged to be part of something run by their peers and continue breaking down the stigma around mental health. Supporting each other and talking about it openly is important. It would be great to see more students get involved."

Brace Fellow Aurelia Zhang '27 Presents on Asexuality in Traditional Feminist Thought



COURTESY OF MATHEW ROBINSON
Aurelia Zhang '27 delivered her presentation in Abbot Hall.

RIANNA BAJAJ
& TAYLA STEMPSON

Brace Fellow Aurelia Zhang '27 presented her research on the historical and political roots of asexuality through the lens of Italian futurism and feminist thought on Monday. Titled "Asexual Liberation: Portrayals of Asexuality in Feminist Thought," Zhang's

presentation drew connections between early 20th-century artistic movements and perceptions of asexuality and challenged the audience to reconsider it as a framework for questioning social norms.

Zhang explained her goal of spotlighting the connections among the three seemingly unrelated subjects and linking them to a modern-day movement.

"My research... traces the idea of asexuality through Italian Fu-

turism, which is an artistic movement in the early 20th century, and how that artistic movement gave birth to ideas in later fascism and second-wave feminism. I'm trying to connect those three artistic movements and compare them to how we describe asexuality now with the LGBTQ+ movement," said Zhang.

John Bird, Instructor in English, was Zhang's faculty advisor and supported her throughout the process. Bird highlighted the originality and depth of Zhang's work.

"One of the things that attracted me to Aurelia's project is the way she uses this discourse of futurism around gender, sexuality, and virility, and teases out of it early iterations of asexuality as a political position, which I think is really interesting and I had never really thought of. What stood out to me the most is mining this potentially very reactionary discourse that circulates around early futurism and finding the possibilities for different kinds of liberatory practices," said Bird.

Matt Robinson '27, who attended Zhang's presentation, reflected on how the talk expanded his understanding of asexuality as a form of political resistance.

"I knew about asexuality as an identity that a lot of people have, but not necessarily as a political

statement, which is what the talk was about. It was about how being asexual was redefining the norms of what was expected in [post-fascist] Italy, and how that was a form of political rebellion," said Robinson.

Nathan Ramani '27, a friend of Zhang's who also attended the talk, recalled Zhang's examination of how the traditional gender norms discussed in her talk have shifted today.

"At the end, Aurelia mentioned, while answering one of the questions from someone in the audience, that the way that the current gender social norms that society puts in place are working out, it seems to her and to other researchers that men are more trapped by their not asexuality, or their sexuality, I guess, than women are, which was kind of a flip from the time period that Aurelia was examining," said Ramani.

Ramani discussed how his perspective on asexuality changed before and after attending the presentation.

"I didn't really think too much of it, especially in the historical context, and so the presentation did kind of open my eyes to the historical side of things and how asexuality could find its roots in both hyper-masculinity and hyper-femininity, depending on the

time period, and I thought [it] was really interesting that Aurelia got to talk about that," said Ramani.

Another attendee, Alex Lin '28, explained how the talk introduced her to the nuances of Italian futurists' thoughts on women and femininity.

"It was really surprising seeing the Italian futurists' perspectives on gender and how they would scorn women. It was less of women but more of femininity and what they perceived as weakness in the feminine side of things. If women acted less feminine, they actually didn't mind that at all," said Lin.

Zhang explained that the primary goal of her presentation was to encourage people to challenge how they identify and view their relationships based on the labels they're given.

"I think, in modern society, it's so common to see people prioritize romantic partners over friends and see those two as wildly different things, or one as better than the other. If you look at it from an asexual lens, you realize that you're really just connecting with the person, and it doesn't really matter what label you're assigning to the relationship," said Zhang.

10 Questions with Jessica Hoffman

REPORTING BY TEDDY STEINERT & SARAH SUN

Jessica Hoffman (she/her) is a Teaching Fellow in the English Department, hailing from Arkansas. Having graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a bachelor's degree in English, Hoffman has worked as a writing center coach and volunteered for hundreds of hours in community writing initiatives. At Andover, Hoffman teaches English-200. In her free time, Hoffman enjoys reading, soft pastel art, and playing Catan.

What initially drew you to Andover?

All of the mentors I had in my life in college said teaching is the best job you can do right out of college. It teaches you a lot about patience and forces you to think about what you value most, lesson planning, and developing relationships with people that view you as an authority figure for the first time. Out of all the places that I interviewed with or visited, Andover's English department was the place that felt like I belonged the most. Everybody was super excited to speak with me about what I like to read and write, and what I had read and written. It was also the one school that told me that I could choose anything that I wanted for my curriculum to teach. Having the freedom of the department to choose whatever books or poems or essays that I wanted, and to be able to model my lessons in a way that felt authentic to me, was really important.

How do you help students move from seeing writing as an assignment to seeing it as a form of self-expression or even advocacy?

I want my students not to see me as the authority figure that gives them a grade, but as someone who is also a reader and a writer and is working on my own craft alongside them. Every day in class, when I'm reading their writing, I'm also learning something from them. So I really prioritize feedback in my classes, maybe a little too much. If you move away from seeing writing as something that is getting evaluated, and instead see it as an active co-creation process with your instructor and your peers, it becomes less of a task and more of a personal project. I also don't really give my students prompts for analytical essays or otherwise. I tell them: write about what you find most interesting in this text, make the argument that you think is most compelling.

You studied English at UNC-Chapel Hill. What was your college experience like?

I actually went into college pre-med, thinking that I wanted to be a doctor, which is hilarious. I sat down with my college advisor in my freshman year, and they were like, 'You have enough credits from high school that if you didn't do a STEM major, you wouldn't have to take a single math or science class all four years of college.' I was not great at it, nor did I love math or science, but I didn't really know what else to do. I enrolled in my first-year fall in this creative nonfiction writing class just to get a general



COURTESY OF JESSICA HOFFMAN

English requirement out of the way, and I ended up loving it. It was a 15-person seminar with this really eccentric, awesome creative writing professor. I loved the workshop style, where we were all reading each other's writing and giving feedback as peers and co-authors. I fell into the English major, and to do a thesis in creative writing, you have to be an English major. I filled the rest of my college years taking English classes like Shakespeare concentrations, British lit concentrations, and African-American lit concentrations.

What's one common misconception students have about writing or literature that you try to challenge?

I think people who identify as more STEM-oriented think that writing is a side thing that they might not ever be as good at, or that if you don't have this inherent talent as a writer, you're not going to succeed. I think writing is so learnable. When people are intimidated by writing, they're thinking of a very specific style of writing, like standard academic English, the sort of writing that institutions like this and colleges push. I try to show my students that there are all different kinds of writing, all different kinds of ways of speaking through your work, all different kinds of things to write about.

As a Girl Scout Gold Award recipient, you have had a long history with leadership. How has that experience shaped your approach in the classroom?

I created a public writing center in my hometown at a local nonprofit organization, sort of a homeless shelter and resource center. That's what I got that award for. As far as leadership goes, yes, I came up with that idea and worked a lot to get it to come to fruition, but most of that work was done through the support of and conversations with other people... My style of leadership is, I like to get the engine running, but I don't do anything by myself. It's similar in teaching. I use their ideas to make something that we're all proud of and connected to, because we all worked on it together.

You've participated in leadership and service experiences in Alaska. How have those diverse environments influenced the way you think about teaching?

Alaska was funny. I did that for 30 days before my freshman year of college. I backpacked with 14 other incoming UNC students, and [though] it was the most out of my comfort zone I've ever been, it was great. I learned so much about connecting with nature and also myself. We didn't have phones for the entire 30 days. I got

to know what it means to connect with other people. How quickly you get to know other people when there are no distractions. I [also] got to know myself. I wrote the beginnings of what became my memoir when I was in Alaska, and I journaled a ton and wrote letters home.

What did building a writing center for low-income students teach you about educational equity?

When I built that writing center, I was in high school. The students I was engaging with were exactly my age and were just as smart as me, just as hardworking as me. The only difference was that they didn't have access to the resources that I had, which was by no means something they deserved. It was really just privilege and luck. Writing takes a lot of time and practice, and if you're worried about how you're going to get to school safely or how you're going to feed yourself that evening, it's hard to take an hour of your time to sit with a writing tutor and work on your writing.

You've published work on writing centers and tutoring, what inspired you to write them?

A lot of the work that I've published on writing centers and tutoring, the primary one was when I realized that a lot of writing centers operate

in private institutions. Like our Writing Center at [Andover], it's fabulous, but it's only accessible to [Andover] students. So some of the research and work I've done in that space is figuring out, how we can take those elements of writing centers, that writing coaching, that ongoing process of peer collaboration over writing, and extend that into a public space. How can we make writing centers public? What venues can those kinds of writing tutoring programs operate out of? How do we give students credit for volunteering their time to engage in those kinds of places, so as not to gatekeep the sort of assistance and help that writing centers give?

You've logged hundreds of hours in community writing initiatives, what motivated that level of commitment to literacy and education?

It was very clear to me how much of an educational disparity there can be, especially in the humanities. I have a twin sister, and we went to the same elementary and middle school, but went to different high schools. She got such a different educational experience than I did, in terms of reading and writing. Her public high school didn't have a writing center open to them. It's silly that whether you have the money to afford private school, or whether you're in an area close enough to a school that has a writing center, should determine your confidence in writing and how you perceive reading and writing, and the skills you're able to build in it. A lot of the work I've done in communities is less so about literacy and reading and writing, and more so about storytelling and story sharing a lot of oral history work, especially in Southern Black communities.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I play a lot of Catan. I love trivia. I love to go home to Arkansas to be with my family. I sew with my grandmother a lot. I like cooking with my uncles. We do a lot of fried catfish and crawfish boils. Family time is big. I read a lot, mostly creative nonfiction, like memoir, but I'm also really into historical fiction. I watch The Pitt. It's a great show. I play guitar when I have time, and then also soft pastel art, which, now that it's getting nice outside, you'll probably see me sitting around on a picnic blanket with a bunch of pastels strewn out.

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HERE AND THERE: THE WORLD RIGHT NOW

REPORTING BY DINA NAMJOO & HELEN XIONG

NASA's Artemis II Mission Breaks Records

The launch of Artemis II marked a major step toward returning humans to the lunar surface, half a century after the last crewed missions of the Apollo program. On April 1st, four astronauts aboard the Orion space capsule — Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch, and Jeremy Hansen — were launched into space with the objective of orbiting the Moon. According to BBC, this 10-day mission was designed to evaluate the spacecraft in preparation for a future Moon landing, with the crew manually flying the capsule and testing its ability to sustain life in deep space. Additionally, Artemis II broke the record for the greatest distance traveled from Earth, reaching a maximum of 252,756 miles during the lunar fly-by. All four astronauts returned home through a splashdown in the Pacific, where a military crew assisted them out of the water and transported them via helicopter for medical examinations. According to CBS News, officials declared the mission a success and stated that it

gathered critical data for future exploration. NASA confirmed that it will now shift its focus toward assembling Artemis III, which is set to conduct further testing on Orion, preparing the spacecraft for the Moon landing of Artemis IV.

Fragile U.S.–Iran Cease-fire Raises Global Tensions

A temporary two-week ceasefire began on April 8, after over a month of fighting between the U.S., Iran, and other allied forces. According to The Guardian, the ceasefire was implemented to protect the civilian population of Iran, reopen the Strait of Hormuz, and lay the ground for a long-term agreement in the future. However, this agreement proved to be extremely ambiguous and fragile, with both sides disagreeing on core issues such as nuclear weapons, according to NBC News. While Iranian media outlets reported that their plan includes “acceptance of enrichment” for Tehran’s nuclear program, the U.S. emphasized the opposite, with Trump reiterating “there will be no enrichment of Uranium” in a Truth So-

cial post on Wednesday. Regional fighting also continued, with Israel launching new attacks on Lebanon after the U.S. and Iran failed to reach a peace deal over the weekend, states *The New York Times*. The U.S. also launched a naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz on April 13, causing oil prices to rise to \$100 per barrel, according to ABC News. Iran has condemned the blockade and threatened retaliation, putting the ceasefire at risk of collapse as global tensions continue to escalate.

Russia and Ukraine Announce Truce For Orthodox Easter

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a 32-hour truce to halt the Russia-Ukraine war, lasting from 4 p.m. on Saturday last week to the end of Sunday, a gesture meant to preserve Orthodox Easter. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy promised to cease hostilities but warned of military retaliation to any violations. However, CBS News states that Ukrainian forces recorded 2,299 violations, including assaults, shelling, and small drone

launches. Similarly, Russia’s Defense Ministry recorded 1,971 violations, claiming that Kyiv fired hundreds of times using artillery or tanks and carried out over a thousand FPV drone strikes. The Guardian noted that the frontline remained active, with the truce only offering neighboring communities “relative calm,” not a full ceasefire of attacks. While truce violations reinforced instability on both sides, the two countries carried out a prisoner exchange, allowing 175 Ukrainian soldiers and seven civilians to return home. According to PBS News, these individuals had been held in captivity since 2022, and the exchange brought hope to the families of the freed prisoners. Since then, various European leaders have vowed to keep funding Ukraine’s fight against Russia, according to The New York Times.

Justin Bieber’s Coachella Performance Sparks Controversy Across Media

On Saturday, April 11, Justin Bieber headlined the 2026 Coachella Festival—one of his first major performances in years, ac-

ording to Business Insider. After being announced the Coachella headliner this year, speculation arose over how much effort he would bring to the stage, with some critics categorizing his past performances as “underwhelming,” including his 2026 Grammys appearance. With a reported \$10 million dollar paycheck for the two-weekend performance, Bieber was among the highest paying artists seen at the festival, a detail that amplified fan disappointment, following what many described as a low-energy performance. Business Insider reported Bieber rarely interacted with the crowd and at one point appeared to be “doomscrolling” on YouTube for a portion of his 90 minute set. While some fans expressed discontent, others praised the performance, according to Yahoo Entertainment. One fan wrote, “These 8 minutes of Justin Bieber singing his old songs, I’m going to treasure them in my heart for the rest of my life. THANK YOU JUSTIN, THANK YOU.” Despite the controversy, the Coachella performance highlighted a notable return to the stage for Bieber.

Adding *The Atlantic*: Inside the News Diet of Andover Students

JUDY LIU & JEREMIAH NUNEZ

NEWS SOURCES

Where do you get the majority of your news?



Editor’s Note: These statistics are from the 2025 State of the Academy. They represent the top six news sources out of 21 options respondents could choose from.

AGLAIA HONG/THE PHILLIPIAN

This spring, *The Atlantic* magazine was added to the catalogue of complementary subscriptions provided to students by the Oliver Wendell Holmes Library (OWHL). The publication joins the

The New York Times, *The Economist*, and *The Financial Times*. Students and faculty discussed the introduction of this addition, as well as the platforms by which they generally obtain their news.

The Atlantic is a magazine known for its in-depth reporting on business, culture, politics, foreign affairs, technology, and science. According to Tessa Hite, the Library Director of the OWHL, the addition of *The Atlantic* marks the resolution of long-standing accessibility challenges.

“Previously, we had limited access through print copies and databases, but those formats were not ideal. We even had a workaround where library staff would log into a shared account and send articles to students upon request, which was not sustainable. When I first arrived, I pushed for broader access similar to what we have for *The New York Times*, but at the time the infrastructure did not exist. Recently, *The Atlantic* introduced better academic subscription options, which made it possible for us to provide direct access,” said Hite.

The addition of *The Atlantic* will also allow students to engage with a unique publication that expands the diversity of the currently offered news outlets.

Hite continued, “*The Atlantic* emphasizes long-form journalism and in-depth analysis. While it still covers current events, it often goes

beyond headlines to provide deeper context. It also offers a distinct perspective compared to other publications like *The New York Times* or *The Economist*. Each outlet has its own tone, structure, and audience. Having multiple sources allows students to compare viewpoints and develop a more nuanced understanding of issues.”

Despite the OWHL’s ongoing effort to expand and diversify subscriptions, some students remain unaware of any change. Mari Uchino Garcia ’29 shared that she was oblivious to these resources, but sees how they could enrich her classroom experience.

“I haven’t used the school-provided subscriptions as I didn’t know about them. I also haven’t used them in class. If I were to use them in class, it would help a lot because you would get to be re-

ally well informed about the current events in the day. And in class, like specifically history class, there can be a lot of connections made to the past and what’s happening right now,” said Garcia.

While the subscriptions go unseen for some, other students feel like newspapers have impacted their daily routine. Phillip Molina ’28 reflected on how he downloaded *The New York Times* after learning about its availability.

“I’ve downloaded *The New York Times* on my phone, and about three times a day, I skim through the headlines to see what’s happening, especially politically, and also read lifestyle articles and play games,” said Molina.

Hite elaborated on the OWHL staff’s aims to foster meaningful connections with journalism for both students and teachers in and outside of

the classroom.

“Students here are curious and engaged, and they want to discuss current events. Having reliable access to news sources supports those conversations, both in and out of the classroom. It also helps teachers assign readings more effectively. Digital access improves accessibility. Students can enlarge text, listen to articles, and engage with content in different ways, which benefits a wide range of learners,” said Hites.

Many teachers acknowledge the subscriptions as useful resources for learning. Marcelle Doheny, an Instructor in History, shared her strategy for selecting articles in class.

“I have occasionally used articles from all sorts of different publications. Sometimes you’re dealing with topics in history where it helps to

bring things up to date a little bit. But you have to be careful when you’re using newspapers, because they tend to have an opinion, so you have to kind of introduce it and use it carefully,” said Doheny.

Doheny emphasized the importance of long-form journalism in an era where short headlines on social media dominate people’s attention.

Doheny continued, “These [newspaper sources] are very important. We hear a lot of our news in very sort of short bursts on social media sites and other platforms online. Even though these are posted online, they’re longer texts, they’re longer articles. You get better information and more analysis through newspapers, of course.”

Reflections on Andover’s Admissions Process

SOPHIA FANG & SIMRAN SHAH

With the conclusion of spring revisits and enrollment last week, the admissions cycle for the 249th admitted class marked a few of many changes to the process over the years, including a return to test-mandatory admissions. The Admission Office and current students across grades reflected on their experiences with the application process.

Jill Thompson, Director of Admissions, addressed this year’s addition of an optional video Response to the application process.

“We implemented a new Short Video Response of one minute or less that invited students to reflect on the question, ‘What brings you the most joy, and why?’ Essentially, we converted our written short-answer question to a verbal video question

to make our application more fun and engaging for both applicants to complete and admission officers to review,” Thompson wrote in an email to *The Phillipian*.

Ashley Zhu ’29 expressed her thoughts on the admissions cycle last year, which marked the first since the COVID-19 pandemic in which standardized test scores like the SSAT were required.

“Having [tests] required or not required will not strongly affect someone’s application process... Of course, everyone who comes or everyone who applies is academically successful, and they can achieve a lot. However, someone’s test scores do not represent what they are capable of both academically and as a person because as some people do better at testing, some people do worse at testing. It just depends,” said Zhu.

Zhu, who interviewed in person at the admissions office, described that she had other options during that time, including a virtual in-

terview and a short video. She appreciated how the admissions process offered flexibility for alternatives to the traditional interview.

“It’s difficult to mandate interviews, like one-on-one [and in-person], because [of] scheduling conflicts, or just not being available. So I do think the video is a good idea for students who are applying, because some people are more comfortable talking to a camera and others aren’t. I do like having a mandated interview or video because it really can show someone’s personality and more [of] how they interact [with others],” said Zhu.

Nafi Diagne ’26 applied to Andover in the 2021-2022 admissions cycle, closer to the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted a virtual interview among other changes in social regulations during the welcoming process.

“It was a [regulation] that you can’t come in, because I remember doing all of my interviews [online]. Then by the time it came around to getting

in, we had to wear masks, but I still could visit in person. I did a revisit day, and I spent the whole day with a student going to her classes and stuff. By that time, the regulations had eased,” said Diagne.

Diagne shared her observations with the Class of 2026, including reducing her class size to compensate for overenrollment in previous years.

Nafi continued, “All I remember people said a lot was [that] because they overenrolled in 2019 and 2020, our class [had] less people in general in freshman year... [It] didn’t seem [like] anything out of the ordinary besides the fact that they had to cut back a little on numbers after [COVID-19],” said Diagne.

Emma Moore ’28 applied to be a new Lower last year. She shared her insights into how different the admissions process may look for students with varying interests, including athletic recruits.

“I was definitely a little bit stressed just because Ando-

ver’s obviously a really good school, and I was stressed about applying and making sure everything was good on that end. I actually didn’t do an interview on my official tour. I did it with one of the girls on the basketball team... Really, the only time I came to campus was for my tour. And then I had, obviously, revisit day,” said Moore.

Chance Hernandez ’29 offered advice for prospective students. He encouraged them to prioritize personal fit over prestige when applying to Andover and similar schools.

“Don’t try to pretend to be someone you aren’t and really just portray yourself authentically, since representing yourself as yourself is the best way to navigate through the majority of life... A school might be ranked highly or highly academic, and that’s good for the institution, but if it isn’t the right fit for you, then it isn’t the right fit for you, and there’s no need to feel like it demeans your own worth,” said Hernandez.

Phrisbee Phlick

COACHELLA:

The Student Experience

Takunda Basvi

5:00 a.m.: I wait at the barricade among thousands of people. The heat burns my bald spots and my scalp starts to itch from my thrifted vintage 1982 niche hat.

5:05 am: I take the special pills the nice Turkish doctor gave me for my hair transplant recovery, which somehow makes my tummy rumble and my head hurt. I re-examine the tablets and realize I mixed them up with my Miralax. Shoot. That was supposed to be for post-ASM Fish Fridays.

5:30 a.m.: I leave a sign saying "went to the bathroom. BRB," and rush to the porta potty. When I come back, a family of four is in my spot. I search for the sign I left, which I find on the desert ground, with extra writing calling me "Fat, Ugly, and Worthless."

6:00 a.m.: I confront the family, whose eyes are focused on my crotch, appalled. Confused, my eyes slowly drift down to my unzipped pants, showing my secret Justin Bieber underwear. Before I can respond, the retired mall cop-turned-Coachella snitch apprehends me.

6:10 a.m.: As I'm sitting, handcuffed in the back of his golf cart, my phone starts vibrating continuously. The Coachella snitch stops the car.

6:11 a.m.: He throws me to the ground and pats me down, expecting a makeshift weapon or hidden electric toothbrush. I have to explain it's just my GPA dropping on Canvas.

6:20 a.m.: I arrive at Coachella jail, behind Kim K. and Kylie Jenner's lounge, but conveniently next to Justin Bieber's set. My cellmate is a white hippie with dreadlocks, who welcomes me to the "shack" (whatever that means?).

1:00 p.m.: My hippie cellmate starts drawing streaks with laxative pills, which look oddly similar to the ones I took. Hmm.

1:20 p.m.: She puts on the Ballerina movie and of course, Timotheé Chalamet walks in at that same moment. His aura changes, and Kim's lip filler migrates in embarrassment.

3:00 p.m.: The sun hits peak and shines through the barred window, and my cellmate is playing an illegally acquired banjo (where did he get that from?).

3:30 p.m.: Justin Bieber appears on stage. I hold onto the cell bars in hopes of getting closer to see him. He starts performing "Beauty and a Beat" and I sulk at the fact that Nicki couldn't make it—she must've been partying at Mar-a-lago.

5:00 p.m.: When Justin Bieber's set ends, I use the tomatoes in my pocket that I intended to use during KSI's set as juggling balls to practice my hand-eye coordination for the PE ropes course.

5:10 p.m.: As the "Gard" is distracted with my hippie cellmate (she took the laxative pills), I grab my phone back.

5:11 p.m.: I get a notification on Outlook: "Head of School Day tomorrow!" I throw my phone onto the concrete.

7:59 p.m.: My phone blows up, and I am hopeful that the huzz has texted me back, but it's just my dorm group chat, and it's a random freshman's birthday. I also notice a text from my house counselors asking about my location.

8:01 p.m.: I panic because I don't have a Reach request, and I tell them that my plane got delayed. I forgot that this strat is patched, and the Dean sends me a boomerang on Insta with a GAP sweatshirt and confetti. He tells me I have a "virtual GAP."

8:10 p.m.: I connect to the jail Wi-Fi and call my Dean via Insta and explain the situation. He says, "proof or it didn't happen," and I show him the dreadlock shavings of my white hippie cellmate.

8:20 p.m.: After crying, begging, shouting, and screaming, I am given a GAP, and I get notified that my bail was set. I beg my Dean to bail me out, but he says "nah, bro, thug it out." I spend the night learning how to play ping pong from Timmy Tim Tim.

Senior Class Rep Proposal!

Konnor Fortini

Hey guys, it's me, Bartholomew Buttrest '27, and I'm running to be your Senior Class Rep!

I ran for Co-President, Cluster Co-President, Cluster Rep, and even applied for the Student Wellness Council. After I submitted my SWC application, Dean Esty emailed me asking me if I was "okay." I asked the same thing back to her.

Anyhow, I would do literally anything to get on the Student Council (I have one more slot open in my Common App ECs), yet I managed to get none. Even Pine Knoll rejected me! Thus, I am running to be your Senior Class Rep.

Proposal 1: Senior-Freshman Mentorship Program

Everyone knows that Seniors LOVE freshmen. As a rising Senior, we should be thinking about them every waking moment because they are the new generation that we can prime into grown men and women who truly exhibit our *non-sibi* culture. We get to instill our Knowledge and Goodness in these freshmen, ensuring they develop into people of culture.*

*This program is entirely voluntary. Mostly because I could not figure out how to make it mandatory. I asked Dean Esty. She just asked if I was "okay" again.

Proposal 2: Removal of EBI

Being an EBI Senior will be the seventh EC on my college app. Yet even I, Andover's Greatest NARP of All Time, would be okay with removing it entirely. My second proposal is forming a union against the EBI faculty, where we all strike and protest, holding signs that say "THE E IN EBI IS A MANDELA EFFECT." There is no way that E stands for empathy and not equity. If the strike is successful, I will list it on my Common App as "Director of Hyperlocal Human Capital Mobilization." Things are looking up!

Proposal 3: Our Marriage

Don't know how I'll get the \$50,000 worth of flowers, though...

Proposal 4: Den Birthday Gifts (consensual)

Though I can't guarantee you a BKH lap dance, I can definitely make sure that someone will get a gift on their birthday (that someone being me). Instead of you guys only getting (fake) five dollar coupons to the den on your birthday, I plan to implement a system in which all of you pay me a (real) sum of 10 dollars so that I can book a private jet to Miami.**

**This payment does not include LIV bottle service and entry cost. Den prices will raise by 25% in order to accommodate for this.

With a budget of approximately \$5, I am certain that all these ideas are practical, easy to implement, and I will deliver on EVERY SINGLE ONE, like all the class reps before me.

History 300 Paper Titles

- *A History of the Head of School Top Hat: Does it Ever Get Washed?*
- *Austen, Jizzings, and Goodall: Janes in Feminist History*
- *Samuel Morse: From Pro-Slavery to Prime Numbers*



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CINDY ZHOU

Overheard on the Paths

"Who's the AM Basics Captain? We need more spirit to beat Exeter."

"He's MY class rep!"

"I want to CXXX."

"No, Epstein invented E equals mc squared!!!"

Week's Top Headlines

- *House Counselors Found Drowsy After Doing Substance Searches in Large Dorms*
- *Average Classroom Attendance for Seniors Drop to Under 26%*



The Phillippian SPORTS

Volume CXLIX | Number 9

*genuinely how do we
beat thragg*

April 17, 2026

Softball Sweeps BB&N and Milton, Remains Undefeated After Walk-Off Win Against St. Pauls

NICHOLAS JUNG

Softball (6-0) extended its winning streak to six after this past weekend, where the team won by 15 points in both its games, followed by an intense walkoff win against St. Paul's on Wednesday. Off to a dominant start, Softball's offense has scored 68 runs over six games, with three opponents mercy ruled due to an insurmountable lead in points. Its strong defense contributed to its three shutout games, only allowing six runs since the season started.

Last Friday, the team finished their road series at BB&N with a final score of 16-1. Andover's offense was led by a pair of home runs from Audrey Gotha '28 and co-captain Rihana Gomez '26, with pitcher Morgan McDonough '29 allowing one run in four innings. Gaby Potter '27 described the strong camaraderie and energy the team displayed.

"Everyone's super committed and always hyping each other up, which is really great. We've been super positive and even in moments where we're struggling, we pick each other up. Our positivity on this team is definitely contagious," said Potter.

Softball's streak of hot bats continued at their first home game of the season against Milton on Saturday. The team's hitting produced 17 runs, including Gomez's 4 Runs Batted In (RBI) performance and Victoria MacKenzie '28's strong 2 RBI, going 4-4. Mc-



AUDREY BAETEN-RUFFO / THE PHILLIPIAN

The softball team gather on the mound to celebrate their victory against St. Pauls.

Donough highlighted Co-Captains Gomez and Ashley Schuman '27 for their performance at the plate and on the mound.

"Rihana and Ashley are incredible players. Ashley is an incredible pitcher, and she has earned so much for us. She's gotten us so many wins. Shutting people down is what she's good at, and it was really impressive. Even to a team that might not have been the hardest win is she doesn't she doesn't lose focus, and she stays out. And Rihana just at the plate is basically unbeatable. When it comes games like that, she rips the ball and she stays through it,"

said McDonough.

On Wednesday, Softball hosted its second home game against St. Paul's. The matchup saw an epic pitcher's duel against Schuman and St. Paul's Lucy Kaiser '27. Both pitchers allowed 0 runs in 7 innings, but ultimately MacKenzie's walk-off single in the bottom of the 8th drove in the winning run. Mila Fan '28 elaborated on the game.

"It was our first real, very close matchup, which was very good for the team to have intense competition and have our practice and preparation be tested. We went seven scoreless innings, zero to

zero, and we had to go into extra innings. It was definitely a team effort. There were no solo home runs that brought the win home, but lots of bunting and just getting base owners across. There was a really fantastic single by Victoria MacKenzie to bring home the win. It was really a fantastic way for the team to come together in the face of very hard challenges," said Fan.

Fan expanded on some of the challenges during the match that impacted specific positions, such as the intense competition between the skilled pitchers and the game's mental aspect.

"[The] St. Paul's pitcher was very skilled, and we had to adjust our hitting against her. We definitely made those adjustments toward the end, which is what was able to get us the win. We had a very dominant pitching performance on our side as well by one of our co-captains, Ashley Schuman, which helped us stay in the game and ultimately win. The hardest part was mentally, everyone had to stay involved and not let one error turn into multiple. Focusing on the next at bat, the next hit, the next pitch, and it was really a team effort that brought back," said Fan.

McDonough discussed the team's central focus moving forward.

"My biggest concern about today was that we were gonna take advantage of the wins that we had and not be prepared. We realized that not every team is going to be as easy as some of the other teams that we've played. We've got to jump on the ball early and continue to stay locked and ready for when the teams are good," said McDonough.

She continued, "We work a lot at practice, on our defense and our offense specifically. Staying dialed in through all of our games, not just the hard ones, because sometimes it's easy to lose focus in the games that you're winning by a lot. It's important to just stay dialed in on all of them."

Softball will play at Noble and Greenough (Nobles) this Friday and will host Choate on Saturday.

Andover Baseball Navigates Demanding Week with Two Wins

ALEX GODSEY

FRIDAY 4/10

Andover 10

Belmont Hill 17

SATURDAY 4/11

Andover 4

Bridgton 3

WEDNESDAY 4/15

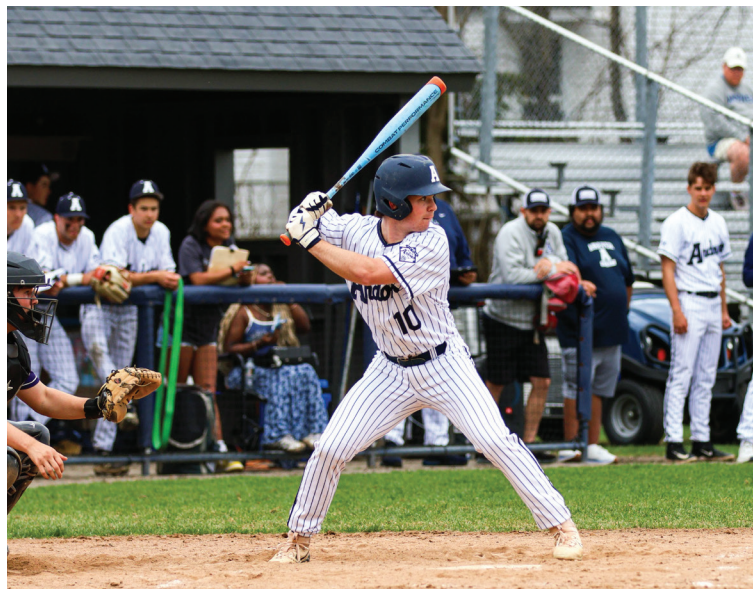
Andover 4

Cushing 0

Baseball (5-3) played a full schedule against Belmont Hill, Bridgton Academy (Bridgton), and Cushing this past week. Despite falling 10-17 to Belmont Hill in an extra innings back-and-forth, Andover rallied with a gritty 4-3 victory versus Bridgton and a dominant 4-0 league win against Cushing Academy.

On Friday against Belmont Hill, Baseball battled through an early deficit and forced extra innings. And despite falling short, Kaden McNeese '28 emphasized the mentality that propelled the seven run comeback, also stating his faith in the team's abilities to push through adversity.

"We were down early, and it's



ANDREW PIZZI / THE PHILLIPIAN

Garrett Falahee '27 prepares to hit the ball on Wednesday against Cushing.

obviously tough in baseball being down seven runs. But Coach Ben [Reinisch] really brought our team together and told us we're in this game and it's ours to win. We were going to go get those runs, keep playing good defense, and attack them. He emphasized a one-by-one mindset, and we responded by putting up seven runs in that inning. It became a back-and-forth battle after that, and they ended up getting the best of us. Still, I was proud of how we played. It shows the belief we have in each other. It's a really strong group with a good core," said McNeese.

This resilience was tested just the day after on Saturday, where the team grinded out a win against Bridgton. This defensive battle forced Andover to return to

the fundamentals, playing smart and capitalizing when the chance arose. Matt Shampine PG'26 described the framework that helped the team generate offense against the current of the game.

"The Bridgton game was gritty. We have a strong two-strike approach as a team. When you get to two strikes, you shorten up, battle, and avoid striking out. We focused on productive outs and trust that we're better than whoever they put out there," said Shampine.

In that slugfest, the moment of offense that pushed Andover to the win came in the form of a Mikah Krystofolski '27 triple. Nate Dubuc '28 highlighted this moment as the catalyst of a momentum shift that allowed Andover to claw out the win.



ANDREW PIZZI / THE PHILLIPIAN

Matthew Ulicny '26 runs past home plate against Cushing.

"Mikah Krystofolski's triple down the right field line was a bomb. The boys were riled up, it was awesome. He got to third and the boys streamed into the dugout. That really started our rally. I think we scored six runs that inning. It was a great team moment and a big momentum shift in a hard-fought game against a talented team with a strong arm. We dogged it out, and we were ready to go win the game," said Dubuc.

Then on Wednesday, in its third game in six days, Baseball played Cushing in a league game, and handily won. Andover came out excited and made plays both on offense and defense. McNeese highlighted the team's persistence at the plate, and a shutout performance from Michael Doherty '27 and Boone Fahey '26.

"Everyone was juiced up and ready to go. I thought we were swinging the bat well, but we were too eager early in counts and kept hitting balls right at them. They made some plays, but we kept putting the ball in play and eventually forced mistakes. In the fifth inning, we put up three runs off an error. It was a 4-0 win for us. Michael Doherty pitched well the first four innings, and Boone Fahey came in and kept the momentum going on the mound. The pitching staff was excellent, and it was great to get a shutout," said McNeese.

Baseball intends to keep this momentum going at home versus Worcester Academy (Worcester) this coming Saturday.

Fast Times at the Oval: Cycling Debuts with Dominant Performance

TIGER WANG

Under the bright sun and windy conditions of the New Hampshire Motor Speedway (Speedway), Cycling kicked off its 2026 season with a statement of intent and dominance. The team faced Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) and Proctor Academy (Proctor), taking on the challenging oval track.

David Porto '26 described New Hampshire's windy conditions as a series of tactical and technical

challenges. However, the team powered through with its high energy.

"It was fairly sunny, but there was plenty of wind, especially during some of the turns. It's an oval that we're going on, and one of the sides of the oval was significantly more windy than the others. But I think the team kept strong energy and was ready to face those winds. Everybody was pretty hyped after, during, and before, and that energy showed in our races," said Porto.

For many members of Cycling,

this trip to Speedway marked the beginning of their competitive cycling careers. Arden Quan '29 described the supportive culture that helped newcomers navigate the pressure.

"My teammates were all cheering each other on. I think my time trial went pretty well, especially since it was my first time. We really wanted to emphasize that if you come to the race, you should come with the mindset that you're going to improve, and that energy carried us through," said Quan.

Porto noted that the results from this race will serve as a benchmark for improvement as the season progresses.

"The team did well for the first race. Our top three boys placed 7th, 8th, and 11th in the first division. I don't really know how well that compares to previous years, but it felt like a very strong start for us," said Quan.

For Quan, Speedway provided clear insight into where the team stands and what it needs to work on ahead of its upcoming races.

"I was really happy with how

the team showed up for the first race, especially since I felt that my own fitness was in a good spot to start the season. This was just the first race out of four, so we hope to carry this momentum forward. We're going to keep working and try to keep doing a good job as the season continues," said Porto.

Cycling will return to the Speedway next Wednesday to compete in the Circuit Race.

Setting the Standard for Girls Crew: Caroline Romano '26 Brings Culture and Community

TIGER WANG

Starting her rowing career at Andover, Co-Captain Caroline Romano '26 initially viewed rowing as an extension of her years as a competitive swimmer. What began as a part-time interest quickly turned into a four-year commitment to Girls Crew.

As a swimmer, Romano's smooth transition to crew was assisted by her passion for cardio, and her love for rowing was sparked by the close-knit community of the team. Despite the intensity of practices, she highlighted the importance of the deep connections formed during the long hours on the water and the erg machine.

"I started rowing my freshman year at Andover. I had been a swimmer for a long time, so moving from the pool to the river felt like



COURTESY OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY
team sport in a way people don't often realize," said Romano.

a logical jump in terms of cardio. I started in the fall program and had my first competitive season that spring, where I made the second boat. I fell in love with the inclusive culture immediately. Even as a freshman, the older girls were so welcoming. It is truly the ultimate

According to Romano, the appeal of the sport is as much about the environment as it is about the competition. The Merrimack River offers a mental break from the academic rigor of Andover. Si-

multaneously, it is where Romano pushes her limits and challenges her own willpower.

"Having our boathouse off-campus allows it to become a second home. Some of my best memories and closest friends have come out of Andover Crew. There is really no way to describe the feeling of pushing yourself to your physical limit and discovering what that limit actually is. Even on the toughest practice days, this team is incredibly reliable and gritty, yet we always keep the energy upbeat," said Romano.

Emerson Davis '29 described Romano's leadership style as positive and energetic. Her efforts in facilitating a positive team culture are exemplified through psyches before regattas and attempts to hype up the team.

"Caroline is a very positive and inclusive leader. After a grueling

practice on the water or a hard session on the ergs, she is always ready to hype everyone up and restore that energy, even when we're exhausted. She makes sure we stay connected, especially with our psyches before a regatta," said Davis.

Additionally, Leila Jesudason '28 described Romano as a role model to the crew team.

"Watching her lead while being so talented at the sport itself has been incredibly motivating. Especially as someone new to the crew, it has been so reassuring to see how she welcomes everyone into the community and sets the standard for what a teammate should be," said Jesudason.

Romano will be attending the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to compete in its Division III lightweight rowing program.

Leading Every Stroke: Willow Wright '26 Drives Team Growth and Spirit

OLIVIA WANG

Girls Crew Co-Captain Willow Wright '26 began her rowing journey in the spring of eighth grade and first joined the team with little experience. In the past four years, through Crew, she has grown not only as a rower but as a leader and teammate. As Co-Captain, Wright leads the team with ambition and positivity.

Wright said the most rewarding part of the season has been watching novice rowers, many of whom are new to the sport, grow quickly and compete within just a few weeks.

"Taking each racing opportunity, whether that's a day in practice where we're competing on a piece or it's an actual race, is an opportunity for us to grow. What's really cool about rowing is that lots of people have no experience with the sport before they come to Andover. It's really fun to get to watch

these people grow over the course of the season. It's only been three weeks, but we had novice rowers racing in our race yesterday and they did amazing," said Wright.

Wright explained that, unlike other sports, Crew evaluates individuals' periodic erg tests to determine rankings, a system that she has found mentally challenging. She added that learning to manage that pressure has been a key part of her growth.

"We have 'tryouts' every few weeks where we do a test on the rowing machine, and dealing with that is something that has always been difficult for me because I put a lot of pressure on myself for it, and it can be very mentally challenging to do something like that and just see the numbers on your screen that reflect you and only you, unlike when you're in the boat, [when] it's your whole team. That's something that I've had to grow with over the course of my Andover Crew career, and



AUDREY BAETEN-RUFFO / THE PHILLIPIAN

definitely this year as well because we've upped the distance for those test pieces," said Wright.

Sarah Sun '29 described Wright as bringing spirit to both daily practices and meets, creating a supportive and uplifting atmosphere.

"Willow is a very positive leader. She always brings the vibes and she always brings her music as well as her words of encourage-

ment. Crew is a team sport, [and] if you miss one person on the boat, then you can't row at all. She's very encouraging, because not everyone always feels their best when they're at practice or if they're at meets, but she's always bringing words of advice, and she always says [that] even if you don't do well as long as you try hard, that's the most important part," said Sun.

Nishi Amin '28 also pointed to

Wright's constant encouragement.

"[Willow is] always willing to talk about anything with you, and she's constantly hyping the entire team up, so it feels great to be around her. Before any erg test or big races that we have, she's always texting us in the group chat, making us feel ready, and making sure that all of us feel confident before practice or before big races," said Amin.

Sun said Wright teaches the team to stay disciplined and maintain team spirit even when conditions aren't optimal.

"[Willow] taught us that crew isn't just about what goes on in the boat. It's also about what you do outside of the water because the weather is not always great and we can't always go on the water all the time, but that shouldn't lower our spirits because we can do everything we need to do to get better on land as well as just working on our team spirit," said Sun.

Dean Burton '26 Leads Boys Crew With Confidence and Experience

AVIAD AWA

Co-Captain Dean Burton '26 breathes crew. Starting by first stepping into a boat in 2020, after encouragement from his mother, Burton has developed into one of the team's top lightweight rowers and as one of the team's Co-Captains.

Burton shared his mindset when approaching rowing, emphasizing consistency and the importance of building strong daily habits especially with teammates.

"I think just making sure that we're having a better day than yesterday, being a little bit better every day. You don't have to make the biggest leap every day, but just make sure you're improving. I think doing everything together helps. Doing extra sessions on the erg or running with teammates makes it a lot more fun, and there's more camaraderie," said Burton.

Sebastián Vermut '27 shed light on how Burton's presence in the boat impacts his teammates, high-



COURTESY OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY

lighting both his individual skill and his natural ability to work as a team and elevate those around him.

"Dean has this combination of being really, really good at what he does individually and being really, really good at what he does on his team. He has rowed singles for a long time, which is a boat where you row by yourself, and he understands it really well. The way he has been able to transfer his skill to

a boat with seven other guys and a coxswain is really impressive. He also brings everyone else around him up, even if he's not rowing in the same boat. Even just being in his presence, people can feel the mentality he has to improve," said Verrnut.

Chris Lee '27 spoke on Burton's focused work ethic and composed leadership style, highlighting how his discipline and quiet encouragement set the standard for the rest

of the team.

"He's focused, he's vigilant, and he's very driven. When he needs to lock in, he does, and he won't let anything else distract him. He is very encouraging, but it's a calm, quiet encouragement. When you have that type of leadership style, especially from someone as respected as Dean, you tend to follow it and look up to it, and you imitate how he acts. I feel like that lifts the team as a whole, especially when everyone understands before a race what's at stake," said Lee.

Looking ahead to the season, Burton outlined both his concrete goals and broader priorities. After finishing fourth at the New England Interscholastic Rowing Association (NEIRA) Championships last year, the team is aiming to break onto the podium this spring, though Burton places greater importance on pushing his teammates to perform at their full potential.

"I think performing to our maximum ability on the water is the goal. If we're talking about

something concrete, medaling at NEIRAs, the New England Interscholastic Rowing Association championships in late May, would put us in the top three in New England, which has always been a strong goal. Beyond that, we're looking to compete nationally if we do well enough there," said Burton.

Looking ahead, Burton plans to continue his rowing career with Cornell University's Division I lightweight men's rowing program. He explained how the energy and camaraderie of the team solidified his decision during his visit, hoping to carry his steady mindset and team-first approach into the next level.

"The difference between Cornell and the other schools I saw was the team. The guys were super welcoming, and I could really see myself fitting in there. The entire time I was on my visit, I was just laughing, and the food was really good," said Burton.

Co-Captain Cade Rutkoske '26 Sets a Cadence of Community in Boys Crew

ATHREYA YEGNESWARAN

Despite being a newcomer to the sport in his Lower year, Cade Rutkoske '26 quickly became a leading force in Boys Crew. As Co-Captain, his focus on community and competitive nature relays an impact felt both on and off the water, drawing on focus and an analytical mindset to aid his teammates' improvement.

Rutkoske initially came to Andover for basketball, discovering crew almost by chance as a new Lower. This decision would eventually shape his experience on campus.

"I was initially recruited to come to Andover for Basketball. All season, guys on the Crew team encouraged me to try crew because they thought I could be pretty good at it. I got on the erg a couple of times, and they thought I could enjoy it and have some potential in the sport. I joined the

Crew team, and it was a lot of fun. I had never really done crew before. It was a totally new experience," Rutkoske said.

Rutkoske noted the importance of the "process" in a sport where practice time greatly outweighs the actual race time. Nonetheless, for him, the defining aspect of Crew is the community it fosters.

"[Crew] is a very hard sport by nature, and you are pushed to go to your absolute limits. It really fosters a healthy community where everybody really cares about each other, for themselves and also for the other people, the other eight people in your boat. Another thing about crew is that you only race for [around] 5 minutes, so the practice-to-race ratio is very small. So you learn to fall in love with the process and go to practice every day," said Rutkoske.

He continued, "With crew, I really felt like I found a place where I felt at home on campus, and I was really received well and brought



COURTESY OF CADE RUTKOSKE

into the sport. The community was a huge part of what encouraged me to keep coming back, and what initially helped me fall in love with the sport. Determination was really a fun part of crew, and it encouraged me to continue with it. It made me so many friends... and current friends I know I will still be in touch with after I graduate."

Rutkoske's teammates recognize his balanced leadership. Nathan Byun '28 noted Rutkoske's role in grounding the team and encouraging a positive attitude.

"He really makes sure that the crew team is in a good mood. He always tries to be positive. He really leads by example; he's one of the best roles on the team," Byun said.

Cyrus Emami '28 echoed Byun's comments, stressing the importance of Rutkoske's approachability alongside determination.

"He leads by example of hard work. He is always someone you can approach and ask questions... and he is always willing to give you advice to get better. He is there for everybody on the team, whether you are just starting out or you have been rowing for a while," said Emami.

Chris Lee '27 noted Rutkoske's focused impact both on and off the water.

"He is focused on himself in the boat, which you are supposed to be. And when we get back on land, he is really analytical... he will point out things you can improve. He is serious when you need to be serious, but happy when there is time to be happy. That creates a positive environment," said Lee.

Rutkoske will be attending Georgetown University to compete in Division I collegiate Crew.

ALL-GENDERGOLF

Golf Captain Evan DeMayo '26 Builds a Team Beyond the Scorecard

JOHN LEW

Golf Captain Evan DeMayo '26 began playing golf almost as soon as he could hold a club. What started as family time has grown into a lasting passion and instance for leadership.

"I started playing golf when I was three years old. My grandfather, who I'm very close with, is an avid golfer, and he was the one who first put a club in my hands and taught me the game. In a lot of ways, golf has been part of my relationship with him for as long as I can remember," said DeMayo.

He continued, "My connection to golf is very personal. Every round I play links me back to the kid I was when I first started, and to every version of myself in between."

As Captain, DeMayo prioritizes building trust within he team, making sure teammates feel supported, heard, and valued in both competitive and everyday settings.

"I believe that prompt and thoughtful communication is one of the purest forms of respect. I make a point of being available to my teammates, whether they need to talk through team logis-



A. BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN

tics or something more personal, I'll always make time," said DeMayo.

Rocco Fawcett '28 emphasized that one of DeMayo's most defining qualities as Captain is the genuine connection he builds with his teammates.

"Evan's really close with all the

players. He's very uplifting, and he loves the team. He loves playing golf and is dedicated to playing his best golf every day," said Fawcett.

Earlier in the season, DeMayo's presence helped set the tone for an inclusive team environment. Helena Lai '29, one of Golf's newest members, emphasized his en-

couragement and positivity.

"He's a really supportive captain, and he demonstrates a lot of aspects of non-sibi. He's always really kind, and even though we've only been on the team for two weeks, he's always really nice to us. And whenever we practice, he gives us feedback and positive reinforcement," said Lai.

Lai continued, "There's an example from [Wednesday's match]. Someone forgot their putter, so we had to get a rental putter, and [Evan] advocated and said that he could use the rental putter and let the person use his putter. That was really nice, because that could have made a really big difference in their game."

For Fawcett, Demayo's leadership is also evident in how he supports teammates during difficult moments.

"I had a tough match against Tabor and he was the first guy to pick me up and make me feel better and helped motivate me to do better next time," said Fawcett.

Recognizing that golf's mental aspect can be just as challenging as the physical game, DeMayo expressed how he works to create an environment where players can stay focused without feeling overwhelmed.

"We're a small, tight-knit group, which is both a strength and a challenge. As is often the case in high school golf, players on the same team are competing against each other for a limited number of spots. Cultivating a genuine team mentality in that context is an ongoing responsibility, and it's one I take seriously," said DeMayo.

Reflecting on his time in the sport, DeMayo emphasized the relationships, discipline, and mental toughness it has instilled in him.

"I love connecting with people and spending time with friends, both old and new. But I'm also deeply dedicated...to my studies, to the relationships that matter to me, and to the people that rely on me day in and day out. Mental toughness is something I've worked hard at because dedication and a strong mental game are so central to playing this sport well. Golf is often called a lifelong sport, and I believe that. It will always be part of who I am. As I look toward the next chapter, I'll be stepping back from competitive play, but the lessons golf has given me are ones I'll carry with me wherever I go," said DeMayo.

GOLF

JOSHUA CHANG '27
DAVENPORT, FL

EVAN DEMAYO '26 **G**
CONCORD, MA

MATHEW LIU '27
SINGAPORE, SG

ROCCO FAWCETT '28
MANCHESTER, MA

LUCY VINNAKOTA '29
NEW YORK, NY

AYAAN HASHAM '27
LEXINGTON, KY

ZORAH WILLIAMS '26
MYSTIC, CT

HELENA LAI '29
ANDOVER, MA

ZIHAN ZHAO '28
ANDOVER, MA

SARAH WANG '29
ANDOVER, MA

JUNU LEE '29
SEOUL, KR

SEBASTIAN MONTEMAYOR '27
SAN PEDRO GARZA GARCÍA, MEXICO

IAN KIM '28
MCLEAN, VA

KEVIN ZHENG '26
WARREN, NJ

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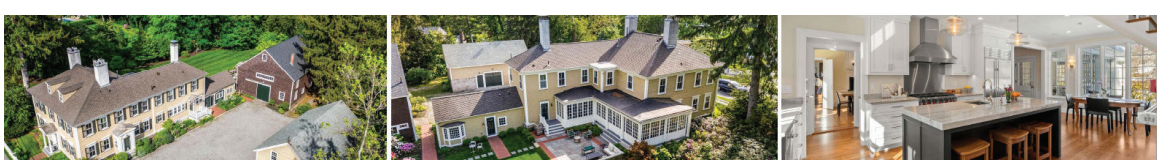


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Boys Crew Still Finding Its Stroke in Loss to Kent

EVA JACKSON

Boys Crew traveled to Kent last Saturday. None of Andover's boats won.

Last year, the team beat Kent at the dual meet but lost during the New England Interscholastic Rowing Association (NEIRA) Championships. Charlie Domina '27 described how, despite Andover's losses, the team is hoping to turn its dual meet loss into a win at the championships.

"Throughout the boats, there weren't any wins, which is a little bit hard, but that's a team that does racing in the fall, that's been

going really hard for a while, and I think we have more room to grow than them. Last year, they beat us at the [NEIRA] Championships, and after, we beat them early in the season at the dual. So I think the sentiment is hoping to get that same result at this time, flip it where we beat down at the championships when it matters," said Domina.

The first boat lost by six seconds after a slow start. The first boat's coxswain, Vivien Valckx '28, reflected on the lesson the crew took from the race, emphasizing its patience and ability to battle back after falling behind early while commending the team's grit.

"I think that the team really learned a lot about patience during this race.

Right off the start, we were down by two seats, and then we were able to work our way back to even, and they ended up winning the race, but I think we learned that even if we're not winning off the jump, we are a team that is able to make their way back and hold off our competitors for a pretty long time and put down our best effort, no matter what," said Valckx.

The first boat has lost both of its races so far this season. Domina noted the results have motivated the crew to recognize how much they need to improve to

stay with stronger competition.

"It sucks to start out on, for the boys top boat, two pretty disappointing results, but the league is just really fast this year, and it's kind of a wake-up call to how fast we need to get if we want to perform how this program has historically performed," said Domina.

Kent finished third in the league last year, so it was one of the team's strongest competitors this year. Sebastián Vermut '27 described how the team has bounced back and is pushing themselves to learn and be their best.

"I think it's really easy for a loss like that to, really send a team

down the gutter, but I've seen a lot of dedication, they want to get a lot faster and from the guys all the way up in the one [boat], they're really competitive this year they're close to being really, really, really fast. And they've been getting closer every day to finding it. The guys on the other boats are super dedicated to achieving their goals. So while the loss isn't great, it's definitely been a positive reaction," said Vermut.

Boys Crew will host a quad-meet this Saturday.

Girls Crew Powers Past Kent in Season Opener

BENJAMIN KAZLOUSKI

Girls Crew kicked off its season with a dominant victory over Kent this Saturday. After placing second at the New England Interscholastic Rowing Association (NEIRA) last season, the team drew on that confidence to push ahead of its opponents.

Girls Crew has maintained certain traditions for many years, which build strong team morale and a level of selflessness. Eloise Malle '27 explained one such tradition: a callout that her boat does.

"One thing specific to Andover Crew is that we do a Name Call. We have several sprint pieces, or several times when everyone has to push a little extra hard, and one

of those times is name calls. Our coxswain will say '2 for,' and then she'll go down the boat. So it'll be '2 for Eloise, 2 for Daphne,' and you do two strokes pushing extra hard for the person whose name is being called, to show that we're all in it together," said Malle.

With the first race of the season against a strong opponent, Arden Muldoon '28 noted how the team atmosphere felt both anticipatory and enthusiastic ahead of the meet.

"Everyone is really determined, and everyone approached the race with a lot of excitement as well. Not necessarily nervousness, but turning that nervousness into excitement. The vibes were high, everyone was really excited, and there was a lot of positivity, which really helped get the energy up on a really long

day," said Muldoon.

Co-Captain Willow Wright '26 spoke about the team's mental strength, referencing its season mantra.

"This race showed us how strong and relentless we can be. One of our words for the season is to be relentless and continue going at it. Rowing is a very mentally tough sport, and we're really strong in that sense, especially with all of the novices who haven't realized how mentally taxing it is. Everybody's excitement and joy at being on the water in the sun and doing this together is really exciting and something that we get to grow with as a team," said Wright.

Wright recalled how her boat pulled ahead within the first twenty strokes and used that momentum to secure its win.

"Getting right off from the start and being aggressive from the beginning was huge, but for me, seeing them get smaller in the distance, which sounds mean now, was really exciting. It shows everything that we've worked towards is paying off. You don't know when you're sitting on the start line how it's going to go, and then to take off like that is really fun," said Wright.

With a constant cycle of moving up and down boat levels, every day of practice is crucial to maintaining a high boat level. Malle explained that this level of competition isn't a divisive force but rather strengthens the team's chemistry and connection.

"Team chemistry is really important. It's the most important part because it's such a hard sport in the sense that it's based on a

metric. Every single day, your performance is judged, and because we have moving lineups, you have to give it your all. Our coaches always say you have to leave all your problems on the dock. You can't bring anything with you on the water. You can't let your day affect the way you row, because if it does, you're going to lose your spot. It's really hard because there's a huge mental toll, and we have all these tests on the erg, where a number defines you. But because of that, we're all kind of trauma-bonded, and help each other compete," said Malle.

Girls Crew will host Deerfield at home on Saturday.

Golf Continues Season with Doubleheader Wins against Holderness and St. Mark's

AVIAD AWA

Golf (7-1-2) continued its strong campaign on a new home course, hosting Holderness and St. Mark's for its first games on its new course.

Zihan Zhao '28 described the acclimation process to Golf's new home course. With consistent practice, the team was able to prepare wisely for its opening match.

"Today, we prepared by having our usual practices during the week, but we also went over strategies with Coach [Brian] Faulk. He's a member at the course we played, so he told us what clubs

to take, where to aim off the tee, and gave us yardage books. It was really helpful because for me and one of our other players, Zorah Williams '26, a postgrad recruit, this was only our second time playing the course since it just opened as our home course. It was very useful in preparing for the match," said Zhao.

Rocco Fawcett '28 praised teammates Zhao and Ian M. Kim '28 for stellar performances, as well as Sebastian Montemayor '27, who all helped the team bounce back from some rough results in the midst of Wednesday's match.

"Our Captain, Evan DeMayo [26], had a rough round, as did

our number one seed Sebastian [27] who ended up winning one of those matches, which was huge. Everyone supported them, and we got the result," said Fawcett.

For Zhao, this game was even more special, as it was his first Varsity match of the season.

"We were playing against St. Mark's, who have been pretty strong recently. Some players were more relaxed, but for me, since it was my first varsity match of the season, I felt nervous. It was kind of quiet, not much talking, just warming up and practicing. It felt serious, but we all loosened up after the first couple of holes," said Zhao.

Zhao praised Montemayor as well, citing his win as the momentum shifter that helped the team run away with the win and display the level of play for teammates to emulate.

"We had impressive performances from our one seed, Sebastian Montemayor. He really dominated St. Mark's and Holderness in the number one spot. That helped give us an early lead and didn't give either team much time to recover after their first matches," said Zhao.

With a tight stretch of close games coming up, Fawcett described how recent wins allow the team to mentally prepare itself for challenges to come. With

eyes set on the Andover Invitational on Saturday, April 25, Golf is looking to use these wins to build some strong momentum.

"We had a couple of ties earlier in the season, so this win helped us get a better hold of things. We don't have a match this weekend, and we have a tournament next week, so it's good to build momentum and set the tone for the rest of the season. It's a strong win, especially against a good team like St. Mark's," said Fawcett.

Golf will face Proctor Academy (Proctor) on Wednesday and Brooks on Thursday.

The Green Jacket's Secret Advantage

ALEX GODSEY

Every April, Augusta National transforms into golf's most sacred space, with 91 athletes from every corner of the world hoping to solidify their name in the golfing world. As I followed the tournament on Thursday and Friday, watching with friends in Paresky Commons (Paresky) or checking scores on my phone between classes, it quickly became clear that one man stood above the rest. Round after round, he dominated the field, navigating Augusta's treacherous greens and slopes with control that no one else could match. Rory McIlroy led by a record six strokes by the end of Friday's round and went on to comfortably win this year's Masters Tournament, securing back-to-back titles despite shooting two over par on the weekend. This was well behind players like Russell Henley, who posted a score of 11 under par after getting familiarized with the course.

McIlroy, in claiming his second green jacket, has cemented himself as an Augusta great. However, his relationship with this storied course has not always been so seamless. Following a PGA Championship victory in 2014, all McIlroy had left for a career grand slam was a Masters



SHANNON CHISHOLM / THE PHILLIPIAN

victory. But the search for that elusive green jacket would go on for a tumultuous ten years, filled with missed cuts, blown leads, and second-place finishes. After a decade of frustration, Rory broke through in 2025, winning narrowly in a sudden-death playoff and remarkably winning again the very next year. I believe this sudden turnaround was no coincidence. In my view, McIlroy benefited from an unfair advantage:

exclusive access to Augusta National in the weeks leading up to the tournament, a privilege unavailable to most of the field.

After McIlroy's 2025 Masters Tournament victory, he gained honorary membership into the ranks of only around 300 members of Augusta National Golf Club, which I believe gave him a meaningful edge. Using it, McIlroy withdrew from all tournaments the month before the

tournament and instead took day trips in his private jet from Florida to Augusta, Georgia, where he played practice rounds on the course, allowing himself to acclimate to the conditions. As other professionals played in long and difficult tournaments, McIlroy dropped his daughter off at school, hopped on a short 45-minute flight, played a round at Augusta, and returned in time for dinner. This extra preparation gave him a clear advantage early in the tournament, helping him score low in the opening rounds and take control before others had fully adjusted to the course, allowing McIlroy to leverage a privilege unavailable to the rest of the field and turn it into a huge competitive advantage. In press interviews, McIlroy himself joked that "[Augusta National] feels like my home course." He followed that up with "I felt prepared that wherever I hit on the golf course, I sort of knew what to do. I know where to miss. I'm pretty comfortable with all the shots around the greens."

This inequity of playing experience at Augusta sets a precedent that harms the professional golf world and threatens to upend tournament preparation across golf. While non-winners only get three practice rounds before the tournament, those with a mem-

bership have open access and are able to play the course months in advance to solely focus on majors. This extra experience, given Augusta's green undulation and constantly varying stimp, allows previous winners to prepare themselves for the conditions they will face at the Masters, learning about features unrepeated anywhere else.

While McIlroy's victory was undoubtedly a golf masterclass, this advantage stands as a stain on his second green jacket, and allowing this special advantage to a select group of players sets a dangerous precedent for the sport. Moving forward, I foresee more and more past Masters winners withdrawing from the tournaments preceding the Masters to prepare for the tournament, putting forth their strongest yet unequal bid for the green jacket, taking away the huge comebacks and fairytale storylines that have made this experience renowned around the world.

In response to this method of preparation, the PGA should simply restrict access to the Masters course one month before the start date, creating an equal playing field, and allow the true test of skill that fans around the world want to see.

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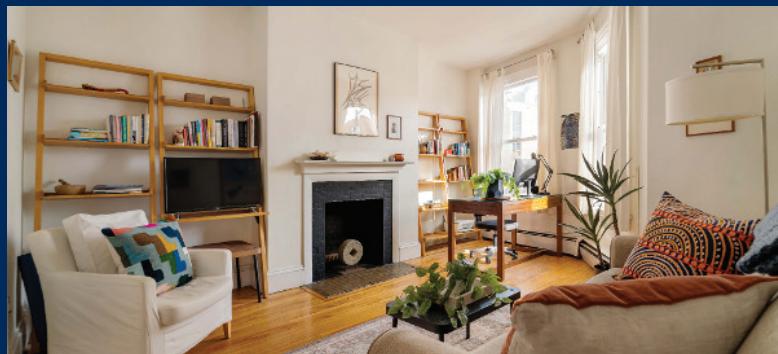
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Girls Lacrosse Stays Undefeated in Three-Game Week

ALEX GODSEY

SATURDAY 4/11	
Andover	13
Pingree	8
MONDAY 4/13	
Andover	13
Governor's	11
WEDNESDAY 4/15	
Andover	22
St. Paul's	12

Girls Lacrosse (8-0) powered through a busy three-game stretch with wins over Pingree, Governor's, and St. Paul's, maintaining its unde-

feated streak.

In recent years, Girls Lacrosse has had tight, competitive matchups against Pingree. Entering Saturday's game, the team focused on precision and discipline against a strong defensive unit with a formidable goalie. Sophie Stetson '29 highlighted the team's adaptability and pointed to their shot placement and defensive intensity as key factors in the win.

"We placed our shots really well, considering the goalie was really tall and a really good goalie. I also think our defense really stepped up. We were able to force a lot of turnovers, which gave us a lot of opportunities to score, and I think that's definitely something that helped us win," said Stetson.

Working together as a unit, the team quickly converted defensive stops into offensive opportunities. Stetson described a specific transition

play that exemplified what the team had been working on in practice.

"We got a steal, and then we moved it upfield, and then we moved it really fast, which is something we work on a lot, and we ended up getting a wide-open goal at the bottom of the crease. So I think that really demonstrated the work we've been doing with moving the ball quickly, and we executed it really well," said Stetson.

On Monday, the team defeated Governor's 13-11, its second smallest margin of victory this season. Regan Driscoll '28 emphasized the team's intensity heading into the game.

"I think everyone played really strongly. We knew that [Governor's] was a good team, and we would have to play with 100% effort throughout the whole game. We've had a lot of games in the past week. I think we were on a 3-game

streak with no practices. So we were just trying to use the momentum for like the past 2 wins to propel us into this game," said Driscoll.

In its game against St. Paul's, Girls Lacrosse jumped out to an early lead before falling into a two-goal deficit. After a timeout, they regrouped and shifted the momentum, ultimately securing a 22-12 win. Vanessa Hall '28 described how the team adjusted throughout the game, particularly on the draw, a faceoff at the center that determines possession of the ball.

"One of the big things was the draws in the 1st half. We weren't winning any of them because they had this girl on the draw who was just so good. But then we kept changing it up and rotating people in different spots, and then we found something that worked, and then that's what we did for the rest of the game, and we won almost all

of them after that, which is huge, because that's how they were scoring their goals to begin with. I think it's good to learn how to come back from that, and it'll help us in these harder games in the future, to know that we can bounce back, even if we're down," said Hall.

Stetson reflected on how the team's demanding early-season schedule has helped build confidence and strengthen its cohesion.

"It definitely showed us that we can really win any game, regardless of the situations we are in. That's definitely something that boosts our confidence and brings us together more as a team," said Stetson.

Girls Lacrosse will face Choate at home on Saturday.

Small Roster, Strong Results: Boys Ultimate Secures Four Victories

WYATT ORRACA-CECIL

Over this past week, Boys Ultimate (5-1) competed and won four games. Even though the team carried only 11 players over the weekend, it defeated Northfield Mount Hermon (NMH) 11-2, Williston Northampton (Williston) 9-8, and Xavier 11-7 on Saturday. It soon followed with a victory over Masconomet on Wednesday.

Kai Obata '28 noted that, in its tournament on Saturday, Boys Ultimate only carried 11 players, a relatively

small number for the squad. Nonetheless, it defeated the past three New England Prep School Ultimate League (NEPSUL) champions.

"We came out with three wins, and we were able to execute many of the offensive strategies that we had discussed during practice... it was great to see some of our newer, less experienced players making contributions on the field," said Obata.

In its last game of the tournament against Williston, competition was particularly intense. Obata described how the team executed a late drive to push them past the finish

line and secure an added-time game-winner.

"The 3rd last game came down to one point at the end, where we were tied. It was like an overtime situation. It was, at that point, when Nate Goldberg [27] made a very good decision, and he was able to come down with the final point," said Obata.

In its game against Masconomet on Wednesday, the team won by a 12-goal margin. According to Paxton Auguste '28, this contributed to the team's preparation, looking ahead to Friday's game.

"The game went really well. We won 15-3. We all

played really well. It was good to have this game a couple of days after a tournament, so we're a bit warmed up for our other game on Friday. A lot of new players got to play, so the team dynamic went really well today," said Auguste.

Auguste added that new players especially demonstrated their ability in Wednesday's game.

"We had a lot of good flow going on among returning players, and we saw a lot of improvement in the new players, too. They did get to touch the disk a lot," said Auguste.

Patrick Mendoza '29, a newcomer on the team, men-

tioned the team's chemistry. Mendoza added that the team will primarily focus on strategy and physical fitness, given its smaller roster.

"Looking over our strategies for defense and offense, and how we can call them on the field. But at the same time, I feel as if we are also going to be doing a lot more conditioning," said Mendoza.

Boys Ultimate will face Harvard HS on Friday and St. John's Prep (St. John's) on Wednesday.

Boys Volleyball Sweeps Exeter and Wilbraham with Confidence and Grit

SARAH WANG

SATURDAY 4/11	
Andover	3
St. Paul's	0
WEDNESDAY 4/15	
Andover	3
St. Paul's	0

Boys Volleyball (5-0) extended its win streak last week, winning two matches against Wilbraham & Monson (Wilbraham) and Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) to defend its undefeated record.

Playing against Wilbraham, Andover went into the game as a chance to try new plays and experiment with a more offensive strategy. Jonathan Oh '27 described the

team's mindset going into the game, and its plan to play aggressively and take risks in the game.

"For Wilbraham, it's their first year in our league, and so they're still finding their groove. They're trying to work things out, so we took that game as an opportunity to take a few risks and work on just being more aggressive on offense because we knew that we could afford to swing harder, and if it swung into the net, we could afford to give those points away. And so we just tried to work on faster balls and being more aggressive on our side of the net," said Oh.

Co-Captain Ray Williams '26 highlighted fellow Co-Captain and setter Ajay Mistry '26, who is currently recovering from an injury, as a standout player.

"We came into the season with the goal of going undefeated in our league games and obviously this win need-

ed to happen for that to be the case. The [most valuable player] was Ajay Mistry. He's the [team's Co-Captain and] setter. He played really well and he's coming back off from an arm injury and he's just been performing really well for someone who missed the first two weeks of the season," said Williams.

Andover won in a shutout against Exeter on Wednesday, playing with strong chemistry all around, from the setters to the hitters. Papa Paintsil '26 described the team's mindset going into the game and the practice it put in to prepare for this game, hyperfocusing on specific plays based off of predictions of Exeter's plays.

"We've just been having a lot of really focused practices recently, so we spent a lot of time just focusing on plays run specifically for types of things. Exeter might run moves a lot, like blocking things and sort of receive drills. Just making sure

we're in the right head space, both physically and mentally, so that we can do our best against Exeter, is important," said Paintsil.

Oh described the team dynamics on Wednesday, highlighting how its practice drills translated to its real game.

"It felt good to sweep down Exeter. Our chemistry was really, really good. So we were setting from the back row on a not so perfect pass and still swinging very aggressively, which felt good because we were practicing a lot of that this week. Even if the passes weren't amazing, we were able to turn those into good out-of-system hits. So this game today gave us relief that we play at a high enough level to be able to sweep Exeter throughout, and also shows us how much we can do when we're all coming in together, working together as a team. And so it was good to see how the things we were doing in practice translated into like a

really important game," said Oh.

Overall, this week reinforced the team's confidence in both their skills and their ability to execute plays under pressure. Paintsil highlights the team's internal consistency and their mindset in games.

"We just realized that when we're on go, the only, the only people who can beat us is ourselves, and once we realized that we started cleaning up the mistakes that we were making on our side of the court. Then, it's just about pass, set, and swing, and then we did that effectively and we ended up winning," said Paintsil.

The team will compete against Northfield Mount Hermon (NMH) on Saturday, April 25.

Girls & Non-Binary Ultimate Gains

Valuable Experience Against Top Competition at Winchester Jamboree

ATHREYA YEGNESWARAN

Girls & Non-Binary Ultimate traveled to the Winchester Jamboree on Wednesday. Facing elite programs including Amherst High School, ranked 12th nationally, Andover finished the tournament 0-3-1 but gained valuable match experience.

Rather than focusing on

results, the team approached the event as an opportunity to sharpen its offensive system and further improve its chemistry. Coaches and players focused on helping everyone become more comfortable in multiple roles in the lineup while testing the team's developing offensive structure under pressure.

Several younger players performed particularly well. Tiffanie An '29, one of the

team's first-year members, stepped confidently into the handler role and showed composure with the disc, completing several key passes against tough defensive pressure. Linden Huang '28 also contributed in the handler position, helping facilitate the offense and maintain possession.

Defensively, Lily Franco '29 stood out with reset defense, consistently applying pressure to opposing handlers

and limiting easy continuation throws. Offensively, Octavia Chung '29, Ming-Yi Tang '29, and Angela Wang '29 were recognized for their cutting and movement, which created space and generated opportunities throughout the tournament.

Although the team did not record a win, Girls & Non-Binary Ultimate remained competitive in multiple contests and benefited greatly from the

high level of play. The team also faced Brookline and Amherst JV alongside Amherst Varsity during the jamboree.

Looking ahead, the team will focus on both its zone offense and defense as the season progresses.

Girls & Non-Binary Ultimate will host Arlington on Friday.

Boys Tennis Finds Motivation in Improvements Despite Losses

LUCY VINNAKOTA

SATURDAY 4/11	
Andover	0
Greenwich CDS	7
WEDNESDAY 4/15	
Andover	2
St. Paul's	5

Boys Tennis suffered losses to Greenwich Country Day School (Greenwich CDS) this past Saturday, followed by St. Paul's on Wednesday. Players fought hard and close battles, although they were eventually unable to pull through to take home the win in both matchups.

Going into these matches, the team emphasized specific situations during points as opposed to just focusing on the technical aspects. Co-Captain Jeff Shen '26 elaborated on how this allowed players to simulate what they would do



AUDREY BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN
Co-Captain Ben Shin '26 readies for a backhand slice.

in a competitive setting.

"This past week, a lot of our preparation has been based on playing a lot of points. We have focused less on technical work and more about situations in singles and doubles, because that was something we had lacked in our first few games of the season. What that looked like was playing a lot of points during practices and other specific situations, so, for example, one player would start on the offense, and one would start on the defense, getting balls on the run,

so then the defensive situation kind of turned the tide at the point," said Shen.

Sean Liu '28 described the mood in the locker room prior to the start of both matches.

"It is always exciting on game day. The energy levels were pretty high, but they could have been higher, which is something that we are still working on," said Liu.

During Saturday's match, first-seeded Co-Captain Ben Shin '26 was unable to play. Shen detailed how the team adapted on Saturday.

"Saturday was interesting. We were missing one of our Co-Captains, Ben, but honestly, it did not slow us down too much. The coaches were able to make last-minute shifts to the doubles pairings, and so I played with a different partner. Usually it's me and Ben, but I played a great match with George Richardson [27]. It was a bit of a narrow loss, but other than that, something that was shared between the Saturday and Wednesday games was the high spirits, and definitely the team being more optimistic as we stepped onto the court... All that kind of manifested in each and every player screaming and pumping our fists and encouraging each other, which is a really good sight to see," said Shen.

The team showed improvement on Wednesday's matches, winning two of the three matches in doubles. Shen discussed the team's performance.

"[Wednesday] was a bit rough. We played a really, really strong opponent, St. Paul's. We lost 5-2 overall, but we definitely saw some promising results in doubles.

We won two of our three doubles matches and successfully claimed doubles points, which is really, really great. Even if singles results don't go your way, it's super awesome to start off the match with a strong doubles result, which is what happened today... I am super proud of the team because we were able to work on different doubles pairings and also different doubles strategies," said Shen.

The team views its recent results as an opportunity to continue to work hard both on and off the court. Liu highlighted the team's focus, looking forward.

"It doesn't feel great to lose, but it gives us motivation to work harder during practice and to be more motivated in matches and with a loss, especially, we will be able to see what we need to work on, and carrying that motivation, that spirit in practices and future games will be very important for us," said Liu.

Boys Tennis will host Belmont Hill on Friday at 4:15 p.m.

Girls Tennis Continues Unbeaten Run With Win Over St. Paul's

JULIEN REQUA

WEDNESDAY 4/15	
Andover	9
St. Paul's	0

Girls Tennis (4-0) faced St. Paul's in six singles matches, three doubles matches, and a doubles exhibition match. The team emerged victorious over St. Paul's 9-0, securing

the team's third clean sweep in a row and showcasing the team's growing skill and competitiveness.

A few matches came down to tie breaks, requiring focus, skill, and stamina to pull through. Angelina Zhang '27 described a particularly close match in which Co-Captain Evelyn Kung '26 prevailed through consistency and endurance.

"Evelyn had a really close match, where she won the first set 7-5. The match was pretty stressful, and it was really great seeing how she

pulled that off. She just stuck to her game, and even if she made mistakes, she just went on with it, which is exactly what [Coach Katy Lambson] told us before the match started," said Zhang.

With just eight players on Girls Tennis, several, such as Lara Madan '27, played both singles and doubles matches. Madan described her strategy in her two different matchups.

"In my singles match, I realized [my opponent] was standing behind the baseline a lot, so I made her come forward, and that's when she

started missing. I kept slicing to her backhand and serving better in the middle of the first set and then the second set. Evelyn is my doubles partner and we had a lot of fun playing together, and out of the matches we've had this season, this was our best one. We started off really well and were setting each other up. I would serve out wide and she would poach. It was just a lot of fun," said Madan.

Looking ahead, Girls Tennis plans to solidify skills it has worked on in previous practices. Mercan Draman '26

explained the team's latest efforts.

"We've been working on coming forward at the net. We want to be on top of the net and more offensive. We're also working on I-formation and Aussie, which are different serve positions. When we're playing a school that isn't that difficult to beat, we try different approaches and tactics," said Draman.

Girls Tennis looks forward to hosting Choate on Saturday.

Boys Lacrosse Dominates Brewster, Wins by Fifteen Goals

WES PHAM & ATHREYA YEGNESWARAN

WEDNESDAY 4/15	
Andover	17
Brewster	2

Boys Lacrosse (6-0) defeated Brewster in a commanding 17-2 victory. From the opening whistle, the team controlled the pace, shutting out Brewster in the first half while building a comfortable lead through efficient offense and stifling defense.

Benjamin Kazlouski '28 noted that Boys Lacrosse's

patience and ball movement created high-quality scoring opportunities, and allowed multiple players to contribute.

"Offensively, we did exactly what we wanted to do. Move the ball instead of taking the first available shot, and work for a more open look," said Kazlouski.

The team's depth was on full display, as players who typically see limited minutes made meaningful contributions. Brayden Ko '28 highlighted Nate Kreppner '27, a defensive player, scoring his first career goal.

"Because [Kreppner] plays defense, he usually does not have the opportunity to come down and score a lot. It's his first year playing lacrosse,

only his sixth game, and he took the ball all the way down the field on a clear and finished it. As a defender, that's already impressive, but seeing someone so new to the sport do that was incredible. The entire sideline went crazy. [When] he scored, [it] was a moment where the team was really fired up and happy for him," said Ko.

Ko reflected on how Boys Lacrosse's cohesive and selfless team environment manifested in its ability to succeed collectively, with contributions coming from across the roster.

"It's the fact that we're faceless, meaning that no matter who plays what position, who scores, or who assists, ev-

eryone contributes. We have depth where anyone can play any position. We don't really have one or two guys who can score and just go run through five guys. We have a team. We have 26 guys who know their position, know what the right play is, and can trust each other," said Ko.

The sideline energy remained high from start to finish, reflecting a strong team culture that has become a defining characteristic of this year's squad. Daniel Ko '29 noted that the team maintained intensity and focus throughout challenges.

"I say we have heart and more grit than any other team. Our bench is electric, and we have good synergy,"

said Ko '29.

Looking ahead, the team is preparing for a tough matchup against Choate, where execution and teamwork will be even more critical. Despite the dominance, Ko '28 remained focused on improvement and maintaining its high standard of play.

"We are expecting a battle, but we have been preparing for them. If we play our best and believe in each other, we can make a statement," said Ko '28.

Boys Lacrosse will host Choate on Saturday.

Boys and Girls Track & Field Excels at Taft and Deerfield

ETHAN LY

Boys and Girls Track & Field traveled to two meets on Saturday and Wednesday, competing at Taft and Deerfield, respectively. On Saturday, competing against Taft and Deerfield, Boys Track & Field placed second, scoring 65.33 points compared to Deerfield's 91; Girls Track &

Field won with 101.5 points. On Wednesday, both Boys and Girls Track & Field outshone their competition by earning 72.5 and 88 points, respectively.

On Saturday, Girls 100-Meter victor Julie Chan '27 posted a personal best of 12.21 seconds, and runner-up Caitlin Ly '27 ran a time of 12.32 seconds. In the Girls 400-Meter Race, Eden Dunleavy '29 placed second in 58.13 sec-

onds, followed by Jenna Robertson-Palmer '27 in third, who secured a personal best of 58.80 seconds. In the Girls 4x400-Meter Relay, Andover finished first in 4:00.22.

For Boys Track & Field at Taft, Andover took the top three spots in the 300-Meter Hurdles Race. In the Boys 400-Meter Race, newcomers Khimani Ndille '28 and Teddy Hiffernan '29 placed first and second, respectively, in 51.50

and 53.20 seconds.

On Wednesday, Andover took the top three spots in the Girls 200-Meter Race, with Robertson-Palmer in 26.23 — a personal best, Michelle Onyeka '27 in 26.27, and Ly in 26.67. Girls Track & Field also ran the fastest times in Massachusetts in the 4x400-Meter and 4x100 Meter Relays. For Boys Track & Field, Tyler Baty '27 posted a personal best of 23.11 in the Boys 200-Meter

Race. In the Pole Vault, Bennett Rodgers '26 placed first in 13' 6", Christopher Ferris '26 was the runner-up in 11' 6", and Xavier Moran '26 took third place in 11' 0".

Boys and Girls Track & Field will host its season's first home meet on Wednesday.



ARTS & LEISURE

The Phillipian, VOL. CXLIX



Dressed to Impress: Unlocking the Looks of BKH '26

CHARLIZE SOW & DYLAN KANG

Every Friday, Blue Key Heads (BKH) transform the campus into a vibrant life of colors, chaos, and school spirit. BKH members have signature standout styles, ranging from butterfly wings to over-the-top costumes. For this year's BKHs, fashion isn't only about looking blue and bold, but carrying on a legacy, expressing identity, and bringing the spirit of Big Blue most unforgettably.

Where do you get your inspiration from?

Malcom Tolbert: "I like to be as bright as possible because that fits the Blue Key Head vibe. The butterfly wings specifically come from someone in my lineage who wore them a lot, and I really looked up to him, so being able to wear them now is meaningful."

Maddie Greenwood: "It's a mix of everything. A lot comes from your lineage and what's passed down in the bins, but also from what you personally gravitate toward. Past members influence a lot of what we wear."

Maya Clark: "From past Blue Key Heads. Once you become one, you're connected to everyone before you. They stay in touch, give advice, and it feels like being part of a big family."

How has your style evolved?

Will Ware: "At first, I tried to wear as many things as possible and go for really extravagant looks. Over time, I simplified

my outfits, which made them look better and more put-together. I also discovered new favorite items as I explored what was in my bin."

Maty Bah: "At the beginning, I wore more accessories like beads and bandanas tied around my arms and legs. Now I focus more on head accessories like hats and headbands, but overall it's stayed similar while adding new pieces."

Can you describe your favorite outfit?

Jack Farrell: "One of my favorites was from last spring during a photoshoot. I wore a hard hat, a construction vest, and white cutoffs, and I thought it all came together really well. Another one was during Winter Andover/Exeter when I wore a full blue

suit that covered my whole body. That one was a lot of fun, even though I could barely see."

Sarah Bae: "My favorite was during Spirit Week when my roommate [Maty Bah '26] and I dressed as Timothée Chalamet and Pete Davidson from SNL. It was funny and well put together."

How do you prepare outfits?

Malcom Tolbert: "We usually decide on a theme the night before. You always start with the skirt, and I usually carry a fanny pack. Then I try to match the theme in the most fun and creative way possible, sometimes using my own clothes too."

How do you keep themes creative?

Maya Clark: "We brainstorm together, look at what previous groups have done, and build off those ideas. Sometimes we branch off into completely new directions, and we often vote on ideas as a group."

How is fashion important to you?

Sarah Bae: "Fashion is a way to express yourself and communicate something about who you are and what you value."

Maty Bah: "It's a way to ex-

press myself. On normal days I dress more simply, so Fridays are a chance to show a louder, more expressive side of my personality."

Jack Farrell: "I think it should be important to everyone in their own way because it's a way to express yourself."

Favorite Item or Outfits?

Maddie Greenwood: "Ski outfits on a snowy day."

Maya Clark: "Beach day, especially in winter because of how ironic it is."

Jack Farrell: "Inflatable dinosaur costumes for Halloween."

Malcom Tolbert: "The wings, for sure."



AUDREY BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN

Singing for the Skirt: Blue Key Head Auditions Begin

ENRIQUE MERCADO '27 — "TITÍ ME PRE-GUNTÓ" BY BAD BUNNY

"I chose this song because I wanted to use a song that's hype and motivating, but also I wanted a song that's true to myself and a song that I love and enjoy. I also wanted to connect back to Latin culture, and I feel like this song was one that I enjoy and can send that message..."

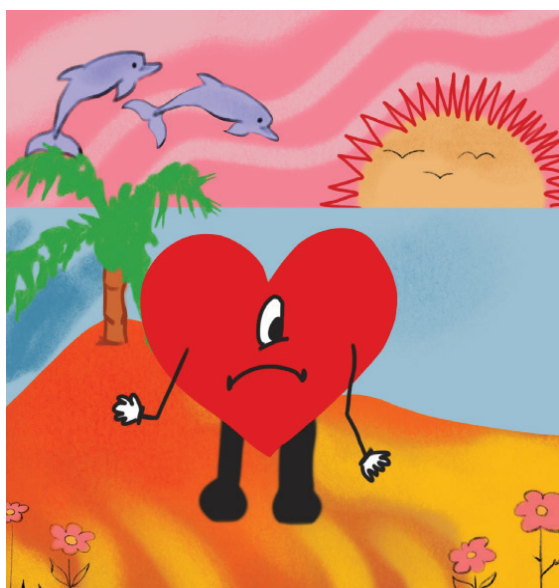
Personally, memorizing the song was my hardest part because it felt like there were instances where I thought I would screw this up or I'm going to mess a lyric up and it's going to be so embarrassing, but learning it was actually the most fun part ever. I ended up learning how to be creative and funny and to understand myself. I am a creative person, I just never realized it."

YUMI LAI '27 — "BEAUTY AND A BEAT" BY JUSTIN BIEBER FT. NICKI MINAJ

"I did this song because I wanted to have a lot of fun in my audition. I wanted to choose a song that the audience would recognize and sing along to. I wanted them to feel the same high energy vibe that I was going for. I was going through my hype playlist and seeing what kind of songs stood out to me and also felt most like me. And so I knew that I wanted to have this song that was a throwback and everyone would recognize it. I didn't want to stress a lot on which song to choose and be super pressed about that, so day to day I would go through my playlist and just play songs. When I heard this song I knew this is what I wanted to do. It came to me, and I'm glad that I figured it out in time."

FATIMA BAH & HAYLEY FAN

Spring rolls around again, and so does the best time of the year: Blue Key Head auditions. The spirit leaders of Andover will let go of their blue paint and iconic skirts as they are passed down to the next generation, but this role must be earned in front of the whole school. Auditions are filled with chants, songs, and improvised skits. Candidates choose the song they perform and sing with the energetic crowd. Here are interviews where applicants discuss their song choices, what the songs mean to them, and how they prepared for their moment on the Paresky Commons stage.

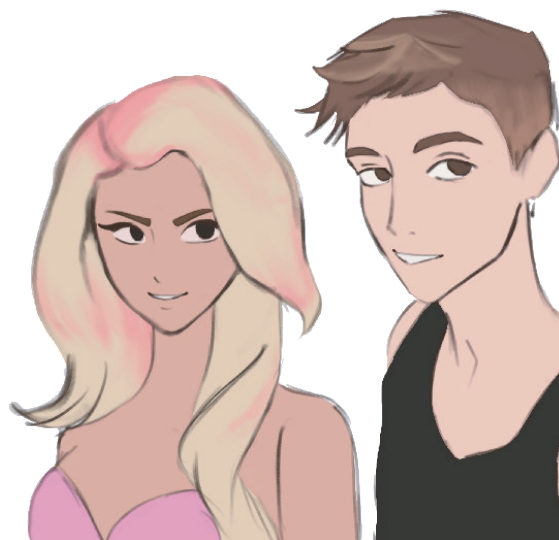


GABBIE KAWOOYA '27 — "THE CUP SONG" BY ANNA KENDRICK

"It was a pretty fun song. I do a cappella, so it felt very fitting to do a song from an a cappella movie. I really like the rhythmic part of it, and I felt like it could be a fun way to get the audience involved. It felt like a song that everyone I talked to knew. When I was in elementary and middle school, everyone would sing it at lunchtime with the cups and everything. It's a really fun memory for me, and I hoped it would be a shared experience with the audience. The audition process was really fun, and I definitely think people should try [auditioning for Blue Key Head] because it's such a unique experience."

KAYA HURTEAU '27 — "CALL ME MAYBE" BY CARLY RAE JEPSON

"In an audition like this, it's really important that you choose a song that other people will know and will sing along with you too. I was going for a pop star theme, and I felt like this was a really iconic pop song. It was a song that everybody knows the lyrics to, every verse even. I've been planning different parts of my audition for years now. For me, I've talked a lot to other people who have auditioned. Both people who are Blue Key Heads and people who didn't get it. I've always kind of had some sort of idea of what I wanted to do, but it's really difficult to prepare. You just gotta go with the flow. You have a plan, but you also have to be willing to change that plan."



TIFFANIE AN/THE PHILLIPIAN

All The Drama

CHARLIZE SOW & JIA-YI ZHI

Campus buzzed with excitement last year when stars Zendaya and Robert Pattinson arrived on campus to shoot scenes for “The Drama” at the Addison Gallery of American Art (Addison). After much anticipation, the film has finally hit theatres. In the movie, the Addison visually represents the fictional Cambridge Art Museum, where Pattinson’s character, Charlie, is a curator. The Addison’s staff, who were deeply involved in the filming process, facilitated exchange between the filmmakers and museum staff to ensure minimal impact on the space and art.

Allison Kemmerer, the Mary Stripp and R. Crosby Kemper Director at the Addison, discussed the experience of watching the movie come to life within the Addison’s halls, as well as the sheer amount of moving parts involved.

“We bolstered our security staff so that all entrances and museum spaces were protected/monitored throughout the process. Most of the exhibition galleries were roped off and remained inaccessible to the film crew. In some cases, we removed art in areas of high activity. Despite the disruption and extra work, it was fascinating to get a window into how movies are made. Witnessing the extraordinary amount of labor (not to mention hands) that goes into even the briefest of scenes was really illuminating,” wrote Kemmerer in an email to *The Phillipian*.

Once the movie hit the-



aters, The Addison team took a trip to see the movie and finally see their hard work, as well as that of the numerous actors, directors, and crew members, come to life on the big screen. Kemmerer discussed how The Addison staff reacted, as well as their opinions on the portrayal of The Addison in the film.

“Typical of the process, the filmmakers did not divulge the plot to us when they were here filming. In fact, in an effort to prevent any media leaks during production, they used a fake name for the movie: ‘A Very Philly Christmas.’ Just as with the movie’s

press, which has ranged from glowing to scathing reviews, reactions among The Addison’s staff were mixed. And honestly, to me that is what art is supposed to do—incite conversation and encourage the exchange of ideas and different points of view. The one thing we were all unanimous on was the thrill of seeing The Addison on the big screen... Those who see the film and know The Addison will absolutely recognize the space. You will recognize the exterior steps, the rotunda, some of our galleries, the Museum Learning Center, and a couple of our offices—not to mention

FELISHA LI/*THE PHILLIPIAN* paintings!” wrote Kemmerer in an email to *The Phillipian*.

Students, like Maya Tomlinson ’28, also mentioned how seeing the Addison in a movie was a unique experience, especially considering the fact that movies tend to transport viewers into entirely unknown and unfamiliar worlds.

“At almost every scene that was recognisably from the Addison, we were very unnecessarily excited, and that familiarity made the movie more enjoyable... because most often films are meant to be unrecognisable, in situations you’ve never seen before, so

you have to work to become used to the setting. Seeing The Addison, a place we’re all familiar with, was so interesting because it felt more real, it actually could’ve happened. Although it’s certainly a fictional plot and The Addison isn’t named The Addison, it was surreal seeing such ordinary locations become uncanny,” said Tomlinson.

On the film itself, Tomlinson highlighted the irony and satirical humor, as well as how little plot was actually revealed before the movie’s release. She added that the movie surpassed the expectations generated by the public.

“Overall, the movie was pretty good, and the directing and script allowed for some really funny moments. It has a sort of satirical humour that’s almost ironic, and I think that that aspect of the movie made me like it a lot more. The plot itself is very unexpected... in comparison to its little bit of noise, it was a really good film, and the point of the movie was conveyed well. In my opinion, it certainly did! It surpassed its hype, if anything,” said Tomlinson.

Tomlinson urged students to see the movie and appreciate the setting and story.

“Jordyn Curet, who played young Emma, did a really good job. Her delivery was funny, and her expression of each line was perfectly ironic. One of my favourite moments from the movie was when young Emma was talking to the web monitor, and I won’t spoil it, but it was hilarious. You’ll just have to watch it for yourself,” said Tomlinson.

Airy Outfits Blooming With Spring

MAYA TOMLINSON ’28

“So yesterday was really warm, and today seemed to be continuing that streak, and I just wanted to wear a pretty casual outfit that felt cute and fit with the season and the changing of the seasons. So I just went for a really fun and casual look. I just saw a shirt that I just bought, and I was like, what better time to use it than now? [My outfit] is mainly supposed to be monochromatic. I just wanted it to be pretty simple. Everyone loves a busy shirt and basic pants. That’s just how it goes,” said Tomlinson.

THOMAS PARR ’29

“[I dress] practical. I don’t often wear dressy pants to school because all three terms I’ve played sports in the afternoons most days, so I need to wear something I can keep shorts under without having to change fully... Not being too hot in these ever-changing temperatures is really important. Some days it feels like it’s going to be warm but it’s actually really cold, and other days when you try to dress safely, you end up being way too hot. I wear a lot more short sleeves in the early fall and spring. During the winter, I mostly wear button-down shirts and long-sleeve T-shirts on the weekends. Just something simple that I can throw on and go outside with.”

BENJAMIN PARK & BOSON BAI

With the hot weather this week starkly contrasting the last few week’s sub-freezing temperature, students are adapting to the warmer weather by switching up their style. With constantly changing weather, and the re-introduction of lawnning as a key part of campus life, students are finding a balance between comfort and style.



COURTESY OF BENJAMIN PARK & BOSON BAI

ABIGAIL WANG ’27

“It’s comfortable, perfect to take a test. I’m wearing a t-shirt since the weather is much warmer. [My fashion] is often inspired by the temperature. My jacket from Hollister is also thin as well [due to the temperature], and it’s also green, which is also related to spring. It reminds me of the green, lively grass. [My shoes] are from Converse, adding a layer of style. [I’m also excited] to try new colors for this spring, such as yellow.”

SHILOH SHARMA ’29

“I mostly adapt to the weather conditions, but most of the time it’s just wearing what I think looks good, matches, and feels fine. I usually only wear clothes like this when the temperature is nice and I can tolerate the elements against my skin. Comfort is significantly more important, but appearance is actually a lot easier to pull off in spring than in other seasons. In winter, you have to wear a whole bunch of layers just to stay warm. But in spring and fall, the weather is pleasant enough that you don’t have to bundle up, so you can still wear a nice long-sleeved shirt or long pants and look put together without much effort. I have shirts with floral patterns that just make more sense in spring. I have a lot of clothing with floral patterns or nature imagery on them, and spring is just the right time to actually wear them.”

WRITE FOR ARTS!

email:

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

- **BOLDNESS** Envision new possibilities
- **INNOVATION** Invent creative solutions
- **CARING** Foster a community of belonging and *compassion*

Share your ideas, get guidance. All grant applicants must schedule an appointment with AAF community liaison Christina Landolt (clandolt@andover.edu) OR see her during Conference Period to chat about their ideas.

APPLY SOON! Deadline is Friday, April 17

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

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO APPLY

Visit the Abbot Academy Fund space on PAnet to schedule a meeting with Ms. Landolt to discuss your ideas and get help filling out the application.



Scan for application form and more information about the Abbot Grant program.

From \$1 Million to Lasting Impact: How the Abbot Academy Fund Transforms the Arts

**ELIAS JEON &
ELIZABETH QIN**

What started out as a \$1 million endowment has now been turned into \$15 million dollars in grants. The Abbot Academy Fund (AAF) provides students, faculty, and staff with funding for projects, programs, and activities that exemplify Abbot Academy's values of boldness, innovation, and caring, and that may not be available through the regular curriculum. AAF was established after the merger of Abbot Academy and Andover to preserve Abbot's unique values within the newly unified school.

Since the program began 52 years ago, AAF has awarded over 1600 grants, ranging from \$100 to \$100,000 each, many of which have had a lasting impact on the music and arts programs at Andover.

According to Christina Landolt, Community Liaison to the AAF and Instructor in Music, major arts-related initiatives include the Falls Music Center (Falls) and Christina Rubio Dance Suite, named after Christina Rubio, a beloved dance instructor and current president of the AAF. Both are now lively community and class spaces on cam-

pus. AAF has also provided funding for cameras, dance equipment, and music-composing technology.

In the 2024-2025 school year, there were 23 grants in total, and four of them were for the Music and Arts department. One of these grants, proposed by Kareem Lewis, involved a two-week dance residency. The grant provided funding for eight professional dancers and a rehearsal director to come to campus to work with Andover's dance students over two weeks to choreograph and rehearse, culminating in a final performance open to the Andover community.

"As a [Repertory Dance Theatre (RDT), based in Utah] alumnus, I designed the residency to bring professional dance artists into direct engagement with our students through master classes, dance demonstrations, choreography sessions, and live performance. The residency concluded with two performances at Andover titled Excursion, featuring both RDT dancers and Phillips Academy students. The program included works by a diverse group of important choreographers, including Michio Ito, Donald McKayle, Katarzyna Skarpetowska, Yusha-Marie

Sorzano, Noa Zuk, and Ohad Fishof," wrote Lewis in an email to *The Phillipian*.

In 2023, Abbey Siegfried, Chair and Instructor in Music, applied for a grant called "New Music for a New Era: Celebrating Coeducation & Falls Hall." The fund cycled for three years, the maximum length of a project. It allowed for the commissioning of new works and brought three composers to campus for residencies.

"In Winter 2026, the chamber orchestra premiered a work by Maita Eyzaguirre '14, Rumbo sureño, inspired by dance traditions of Colombia's Caribbean coast. In Winter 2025, the chamber orchestra premiered An American Reflection by Quinn Mason, which we also took on tour to London. Some chamber groups also learned pieces by Mr. Mason, and we had a Q&A dinner in the Mural Room with almost 50 students in attendance, talking about a life in the arts, composition, music, and identity. In Spring 2024, alongside the Abbot at Andover celebrations of co-education, the chamber orchestra premiered Awaken by Gwyneth Walker ['64]," wrote Siegfried in an email to *The Phillipian*.



EMMANUEL OKEKE/THE PHILLIPIAN

Best and Worst Dressed at Coachella 2026

BEST:

HAILEY BIEBER

Hailey Bieber proved at "Bieberchella" that she doesn't need an elaborate look to stand out. Wearing a yellow vintage 1998 Christian Dior slip dress with an intricate fuchsia trim, Bieber embraced a minimal, understated silhouette that felt effortless. Paired with sky-blue mules and layered hair, the look relied on the cohesiveness of its color palette and minimal styling rather than embellishment. In a crowd full of maximal looks, Bieber's outfit stood out, showing that simplicity, when executed with the right pieces, can be just as striking.

ADDISON RAE

Dressed in a structured white corset dress with a flared tutu skirt and a cascade of dollar bills draped across her shoulders, Addison Rae brought one of the most memorable looks to Coachella. With the layered bills at the forefront, this look mirrored the themes of fame and wealth in her music, making the outfit feel like an extension of her performance.

FKA TWIGS

Despite a minimal white outfit, FKA Twigs stood out through the precision of her outfit's details. Dressed in a white tank top, minimal white bottoms, and nude laced boots, the outfit itself was kept deliberately simple, allowing for her intricate red braids and bold eye makeup to stand out. In a festival where most attendees and performers focus mainly on the clothing, Twigs' approach stood out in allowing her hair and makeup to carry the visual weight of the entire look.

CHARLIZE SOW & DYLAN KANG

Coachella 2026 once again turned the California desert into a showcase for some of the year's most talked about fashion moments. This year's looks ranged from vintage archive pieces to minimalistic silhouettes and intricate styling. Beyond festival wear, many outfits felt like extensions of the performances themselves, with artists using fashion to reinforce their music and identity. At the same time, not every look landed, and some fell more flat than others.



ANGELA GUO/THE PHILLIPIAN

WORST:

WINNIE HARLOW

Winnie Harlow, known for her strong runway presence and bold style choices, arrived at Coachella in a khaki halter mini dress paired with black ankle boots and a structured handbag. While the dress itself had a nice shape, the overall outfit didn't come together. The khaki color made the look feel a bit dull, especially for a festival like Coachella, where brighter or more eye-catching colors usually stand out. The flowy, lightweight dress also didn't pair well with the heavy boots. Instead of creating contrast, it felt flat and had no cohesion. Everything seemed to be going in a different direction, and with minimal accessories and a very neutral palette, the outfit ended up feeling more like something for a casual dinner than a major festival.

MADELYN CLINE

Madelyn Cline, a well-known actress usually seen in polished red carpet looks, took a much more casual approach at Coachella. She wore a cropped graphic band tee with light-wash denim shorts and black ankle boots. While this fits the typical festival style, it felt a little too safe and predictable. The gray tones of the shirt with the simple denim didn't create much contrast, so the outfit didn't really stand out. It also didn't feel like the pieces were building toward anything; nothing tied the look together or made it feel intentional. Overall, it came across more like an everyday summer outfit than something styled specifically for Coachella.

KYLIE JENNER

Kylie Jenner, who is usually one of the biggest trendsetters at Coachella, went for a Y2K-inspired look with a cream fringe bra top and low-rise denim. The idea was definitely bold, but the execution felt off. The top had a lot going on with the shimmer and fringe, while the jeans were very simple. Instead of working together, the pieces competed with each other. One part felt overdone, while the other felt too basic. Without more layers or accessories to connect everything, the outfit didn't feel fully put together and came across more like an unfinished idea than a complete look.

Lillian Montalto

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