

From Saltiness & Sweetness to Showing Up & Letting Go: Four Seniors Reflect on Lessons Learned at Andover



JUSTIN PUNO '26



SOPHIA LAZAR '26



WILL OH '26



NNEKA EZEIKE '26

COURTESY OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY

OLIVIA TEMPLE & JEREMIAH NUNEZ

Justin Puno '26, Sophia Lazar '26, Will Oh '26, and Nneka Ezeike '26 took the stage at last Friday's All-School Meeting (ASM) to deliver Senior remarks. The four reflected on their experiences and memories at Andover, sharing stories of growth and realization. The ASM featured multiple performances by music ensembles, including the Fidelio Society and Andover Festival Orchestra.

To begin the remarks, Puno shared a letter he wrote in his Upper English class consisting of his goals and ambitions for the year. He explained how his experiences navigating Andover as a new Upper allowed him to begin seeing success as personal development rather than perfection.

"The very first item on that list, right at the top, underlined, said, 'Maintain a 6.0 GPA.' I was always someone who cared about my grades... I dis-

covered that I'd accomplished every single one of my goals [this year], except for the one right at the top... I realized that I hadn't failed. I had just been measuring the wrong things. See, success isn't a GPA. It's not a list. Rather, it's the people you find, the discomfort you push through, and the version of yourself you're becoming, slowly, imperfectly, one interaction at a time," said Puno.

To illustrate his realization, Puno cited an immersion program he took in Oviedo, Spain, in the summer before coming to Andover. He emphasized the meaning of belonging even when it requires showing vulnerability.

"I was so focused on not looking incompetent that I was missing every opportunity to make genuine connections. But, over time, something shifted. I started going to the same cafe every morning, not because the coffee was exceptional, but because the more I showed up, the easier it got... None of these moments were dramatic, but each one taught me

the same thing. Belonging isn't something you arrive at. It's something you build by showing up before you're ready and by being willing to be a little lost in front of other people," said Puno.

Lazar spoke next about how her experience of losing her father altered her mindset, causing her to take agency in her decisions instead of relying on the opinions of others.

"I would catch myself thinking about how I would explain my choices to my dad, why this class made sense, why this path was the right one, and how everything added up to some grand plan. Except now, I was explaining it to a ghost. At some point, that got to be exhausting. So I stopped. And for the first time, I started making decisions that felt truly my own. I quit swimming, not in some dramatic, life-altering way. I just realized that I didn't want to keep

Continued on A5, Column 1

Movement of the Means Essay Prize to Kemper

SOPHIA FANG & KAI OBATA

Every spring, Andover's English Department awards the Means Essay Prize for the declamation of an original personal essay written during the school year. Traditionally, the top three finalists declaim their essays during All-School Meeting (ASM) in Cochran Chapel. This year, however, the final declamation will take place in Kemper Auditorium (Kemper) at 6 p.m. this Friday.

In an email to *The Phillipian*, Leon Calleja, Chair in English, wrote that the move to Kemper was an adjustment as the Means Essay couldn't be worked into this year's ASM schedule.

"The reality is that there was no space for the Means declamation in the ASM schedule this spring. While I am uncertain of the exact cause of this, I do know that there was some miscommunication between the English depart-

ment and the committee that determines the ASM schedule. (I believe that committee is run out of the HOS office.) The unfortunate result was that the Means [Essay Prize] could not be offered during ASM this year," wrote Calleja in an email to *The Phillipian*.

Finalist Jeannie Kang '28 expressed her disappointment in the change, saying she believed a part of the Means Essay's appeal is the opportunity to declaim a personal work to the entire student body.

"It would have been great if we got to share it with the community... [as] the idea [is] that you can share it with a larger group of audience who you would've been hesitant to talk to, or wouldn't have been otherwise compelled to listen to your story. The people coming to Kemper are the ones who are interested in either the three of us, or our stories. So it would have been cool to expose people who don't have similar interests or intersections to share the specific knowledge that I have and the experience

that I wrote about," said Kang.

Nevertheless, Kang acknowledged the positive aspects of reading to a smaller audience and thanked the English Department for their work in organizing the event.

"This is important, I'm still grateful to the English Department for trying their best to figure out a way for me to share [my work]. Thinking on the bright side, it might even be better that I get to see the audience and literally look into their eyes while sharing my piece, because [the piece is] important to me," said Kang.

The finalists' essays cover a diverse range of topics. Finalist Alex Lin '28 shared how her essay's topic evolved from stargazing with her friends in the campus graveyard.

"[My friends and I] would stargaze a lot, because they were taking

Continued on A5, Column 4

Shifts in Sports Funding Allocation Impacts Athletic Teams

KRISTEN MA & NIKI TAVAKOLI

Each year, changes in athletic funding shape how teams allocate budgets and train during their seasons. In the past, sports funding had been accumulated through gifts, where sports teams possessed individual accounts funded by parent donations. Recently, however, Andover has been moving away from individual accounts and toward more centralized, discretionary funding structures in an effort to maintain fairness across programs.

These changes have altered how teams obtain financing for specific needs. Deputy Head of School Merilee Mardon described the current budgeting process.

"As I understand it, budgeting is a dialogue between athletics and specific teams. Teams identify their needs and relay them through the athletics department, with the goal of supporting students on those teams...there's been an effort to create more consistent experiences for students, regardless of the team, because the student experience is the priority," said Mardon.

Mardon continued, "Teams explain their needs, and some teams naturally have bigger expenses than others. Football, for example, requires a lot of equipment, while Ultimate may require less. We're also a very large and complicated school, so communication is not always perfect. We acknowledge that, and there's an effort to improve it."

Scott Hoenig, Head Coach of Boys Varsity Ultimate and Instructor in Mathematics, explained that his team had a specially designated account

parents could donate to in past years. Now, the team communicates its needs directly to the athletics department.

"We spent [the gifts account] on the stuff that the parents wanted us to, in this case it was the video camera system and some subscriptions for several years. That gift account is no longer there. Now we just say what it is that we need and so we continue to be able to have that monthly subscription for the video system," said Hoenig. "From my perspective that hasn't hampered our program... I'm able to get what it is that we need."

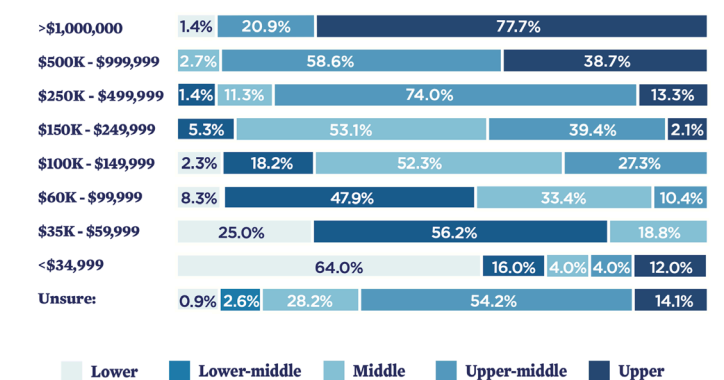
Similar to team gift funds, dorm funding has also moved towards a more centralized structure in recent years. Dean of Students and Residential Life Susan Esty explained that the previous system, in which each dorm had its own fund for parent donations, created inequities between dorms. She noted that the creation of a centralized House Discretionary Fund was intended to address those disparities.

"Sometimes you might, by just luck of the draw, because we're intentionally diverse, you might have a big dorm that has a whole lot of funding from parents, and you could have a big dorm that has very little funding from parents. You all have the per-head school funding. With the parent gifts, it was really inequitable. And so, we ask house counselors to share it at the start of the year, that if you want to make a donation for dorm activities, dorm bonding, this sort of thing, please

Continued on A5, Column 1

2026 State of the Academy Elicits Discussion Across Campus

PERCEIVED SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS BY INCOME



Data taken from the 2026 State of the Academy.

SARAH SUN & ELIZABETH SAKA

The release of *The Phillipian's* 2026 State of the Academy (SOTA) last Friday prompted reflections on survey results related to feminism, socioeconomic status, the Head of School, and drug use at Andover. Conducted annually by *The Phillipian*, SOTA is an anonymous survey that aims to represent student experiences and perspectives at Andover. This year, 76 percent of the student body completed the 134-question survey, marking a 1.8 percent increase from 2025's completion rate.

In the SOTA's Politics & Worldview section, 96.3 percent of respondents said they supported the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of feminism, while only 67.4 percent said they considered themselves feminists. Vivienne Giebels '29 explained how it conflicts with her own understanding of feminism.

"That's disappointing. I mean feminists are just fighting for equality of fe-

males. If that is the correct definition or if that's how I'm viewing it, that's not good," said Giebels.

Henry Wall '27 expanded on this ambiguity, suggesting the addition of questions that address varying definitions of feminism between students.

"I overheard someone talking about how the definition of feminism has changed, because the word itself can carry certain connotations. For some men, calling themselves feminists can feel emasculating, even if they support women's rights. It's important that both questions are included, because supporting women's rights and equality probably gives a more accurate sense of where Andover students stand on feminist issues than simply asking whether they identify as feminists," said Wall.

The 2026 SOTA reported that 58.6 percent of respondents whose families make between \$500,000 and \$999,999 annually still

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Commentary, A2

"The Outdoors Is Calling"

Spring is here, and it's time we seek inspiration from outside.

Eighth Page, A8

Springtime

Can we get some nice weather around here?

Sports, B1

A/E Victory and NEPSB-VA Champions

Coming off of a slow first set, Boys Volleyball (10-0) dominated Exeter to become league champions.

Arts, B7

Courant Celebrates with Launch Party

Brought by coheads Maggie Fulop '26 and Keren Song '26, the launch party celebrated the publication of student writing and artwork.

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Editorial

This is Why We Sack

If your peers have yet to call out to you, “let’s sack,” you must have at least seen others around campus kicking a small, pellet-filled beanbag. Amidst an online resurgence of hacky sack, also known as “sacking,” the activity has garnered the attention of many students. You may see “sacking” happening on the lawn, the entrance of Bulfinch Hall, or the walkways leading to Paresky Commons. Yet, beyond it being a fun campus trend, hacky sack is an opportunity to expand our social circles.

As rainfall begins to pause and temperatures rise, students typically engage in lawn activities such as spikeball or merely lying on the ground with some friends. Yet, hacky sack offers us something that these activities don’t. Spikeball demands competitive play and limits players, while relaxing on the lawn requires a pre-existing social circle, making it awkward for unacquainted passersby to join.

Hacky sack, inherently marked by collaboration and a capacity for an unlimited number of players, presents a unique opportunity to meet and include new people. The activity’s primary uniqueness lies in the shared objective it demands of all participants: keep the bag off the ground. Laughing together over a missed pass or complimenting a save, hacky sack breaks social barriers by allowing students to build rapport with unfamiliar faces, thereby creating a stronger sense of unity among ourselves. However, only when we begin to make an active effort to widen our circles and call out

to familiar, yet unacquainted passersby can we easily transform a straightforward lawn activity into a social bridge.

Today’s weather forecast predicts rain and gray skies, though in the next week, many of us may have already noticed that temperatures may reach the nineties. To Andover’s hacky sack community, be conscious of the social power you hold by turning your games into open invitations for passersby. If you happen to already be participating in a hacky sack circle, call out to a peer you may not be close with. Say, “let’s sack.” And to those traversing the paths, be eager to step out of your comfort zone and join the circle, regardless of your “sacking” experience. Know that building community is far more important than perfect coordination.

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

The Outdoors is Calling

MEDHA KONDA



A. LEE / THE PHILLIPIAN

Sports never particularly interested me as a kid. When prompted to go outside, I’d make up some excuse, not unlike my dog, who just hides under the bed. Part of it was my intense allergies that were aggravated by the Florida sun, but also an unwillingness to take part in the public humiliation rituals that were team sports. As a result, I got winded running the mile and loathed exercise. One thing that I could do, however, was walk. The nature of my hometown was, at times, the only thing I appreciated about it, and so I began to seek out that enjoyment. What started as pleasant walks became a profound love for hiking, despite the inherent flatness of my state, the thrill of finishing a difficult trail, or sitting on a stump with a notebook and pen atop a beautiful view, because inspiration struck just then, and those feelings are like no other. In hikes down to Hidden Lake in Montana and searches for urban folklore in New Hampshire with Outdoor Pursuits, reconnecting with nature has helped me find myself among the modern noise. Still, most adolescents don’t seem to find that enjoyment in being silently alone with nature—instead, they opt for activities on trimmed fields and hard courts. If we don’t take a leap in winding trails and star-filled nights, what is it that we’re losing?

An aspiring artist quite often runs into a recurring roadblock: a lack of inspiration. When we fall into routines, as the new term settles in, we struggle to find interesting things to incorporate



CAMILA CHEN / THE PHILLIPIAN

into brush strokes or musical notes. We spend time searching for inspiration, for things that are outside of the mundane, trying to coalesce one-off phrases or metaphors into a thematic work. When I feel lost about the direction of my creative work at times, campus walks have offered me much to draw from. It doesn’t simply seem to be extravagant trips in the Whites or at Cotopaxi that help me put the pen to paper, but even night walks on Abbot Campus never leave me empty-handed. A cozy, yellow-lit bedroom atmosphere certainly can get the creativity going, but it is also routine, unlike experiencing unexpected bites of cold air and observing tacky spring decor on homes in town far. Though I’ve equally written what I’d call successful pieces in my room, there’s somewhat of a breath of inspiration that comes from being outside.

When you reach the summit of a trail that took numerous water breaks, de-layering, and leg cramps, it’s not the homework waiting in your backpack in the car that comes to mind. It’s not how worn out you feel, how cold it is outside, or the lack of cellular data on your phone. Even a mustard and provolone sandwich tastes perfect when you’re looking out at the mountains and skyline. Perhaps it’s called “Type-B” fun, but there’s also fun in moments when you’re tired and at full energy. In those moments, there’s still never a hurry for “what’s next” because everyone builds their own journey in nature. More so, the beauty of hiking and absorbing the sun is in the disconnect from the bubbling world, where we’re always optimizing productivity or working on some application. It doesn’t need to be backpacking through the Appalachians

either: it could also entail biking through the woods, hide and seek, or cross-country skiing on the soccer fields in winter. The Andover community is largely students from sprawling urban areas, and the nature on campus is something new to take advantage of. What we take away from our adventures outdoors is the freedom that comes from seeing your breath vaporize in the cold and the satisfaction after an 8-mile day. That adventure is exactly what we’ve lost in the days when we roam only the places we know and keep to our laps.

There’s magic in moments spent roaming the Sanctuary with a friend; words aren’t always shared, but looking up at the stars speaks volumes enough. Solace is found in listening to music on an early Saturday morning walk downtown, when the town is still lulled to sleep.

The outdoors is all around us, in the calm paths we can choose to take, or that Outdoor Pursuits trip where your cabinmates turned into close friends. But all of the benefits of the trees, the sun, and the flowers are slipping from us as we continue to stick to our tasks and our beloved inside time. Seek out those moments chasing friends on the lawn, sharing a bike built for one, and catching inspiration on the dorm’s front stoop. Sometimes, watching the sunset in silence on a Friday afternoon is all the reminder we need that things do get better. So hurry up and open the door—the outdoors is calling after all.

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CORRECTIONS:

Why We Must Die to Live

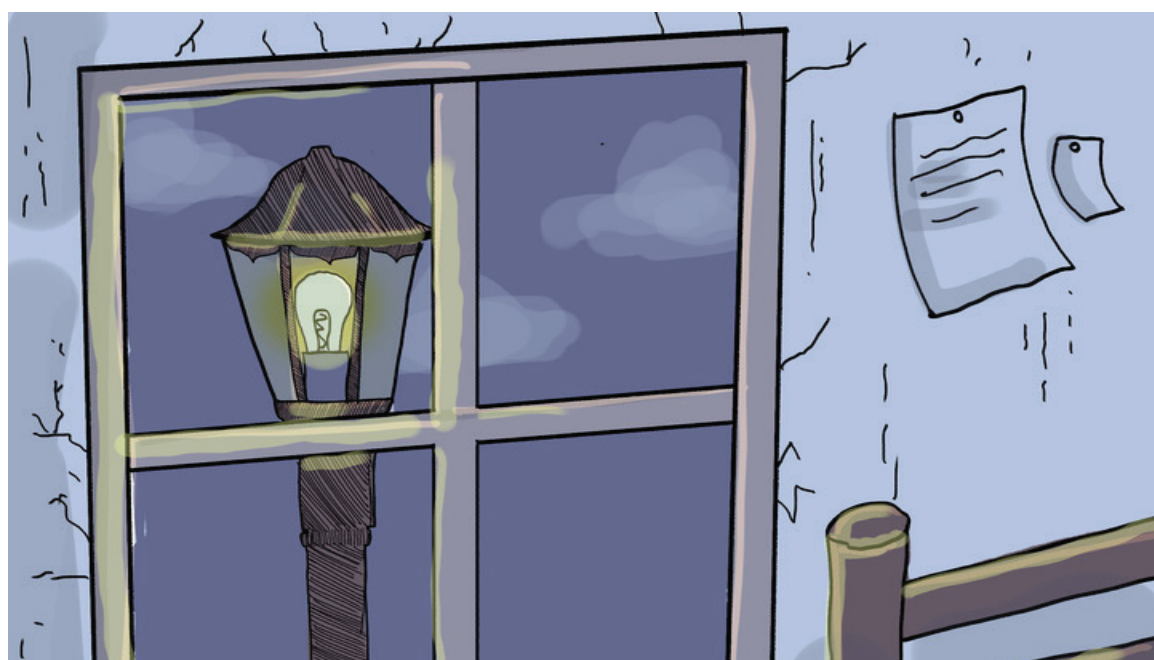
JACOB SHIN



J. NUÑEZ / THE PHILLIPIAN

The lamp standing outside my window seemed to be glaring into my new room, in an attempt to intimidate me from sleeping. The intermittent sound of distant cars speeding their way through the nearby highway kept my ears ringing, and my mind awake. But these things, I could get used to. Eventually, my eyes would be able to adjust to the brightness of the lamp, and my ears would learn to muffle the busy roads. There was one other presence that kept me awake into the early hours of the dawn. The one truth I could not rid my mind of, the one unbearable chaos that tortured my sleep every night, was the thought of death. My apprehension of death grew so severe that my everyday life was affected by my fear of it. Flights to the US—even the car rides to the airport left me shaking in my seat, frantically looking through my window to check for threats that would bring about my untimely death. My journey to overcoming this fear and accepting death as the prerequisite to life started with a book.

As students, death is not a concept that many of us feel the need to delve deep into, as it is a reality that most of us feel is too distant to be considered. We are often overwhelmed by the several distractions that fill our daily lives; it doesn't



DASHA GOMEZ / THE PHILLIPIAN

seem worth the while to think about something so depressing when we could be completing a task or enjoying the present. But there are facets of life that can only be discovered through a reflection of its fragility. Rather than as a daunting enemy, it is important to consider death as an ally to make our lives more fulfilling by accompanying us on our respective journeys.

From a holistic perspective, the current, widely-held belief that we will enjoy long and healthy lives is an irregularity within the context of human history. Up until the 19th century, death was a concept far more common and immediate than what we perceive it to be in the modern age. Our ancestors likely had a completely different view of life than how we see it today; more accustomed to their own finitude. To us, students who still have our whole lives ahead of us, often deny the notion of death as a reality that is irrelevant to us, and this gives us the false pretense that today's mistakes can be resolved in tomorrow's opportunity. But the truth is that our time in this world is limited, and so are the number of opportunities we are given. By having faith in our tomorrow, we often put off the

possibilities presented by today. We obsess ourselves with the promise of the future, and we sacrifice the lasting moments that make our lives fulfilling.

When Breath Becomes Air is an autobiography written by a young neurosurgeon faced with the impossibility of death. Diagnosed with lung cancer, I interpreted Paul Kalanithi's memoir as not so much a cry for help and more as a warning to readers regarding the finitude of life. He describes his journey to becoming a doctor, the sacrifices he made in completing his degrees, and how his final moments with his newborn daughter helped him realize the true meaning behind life. After completing the book, I was left with one major question: How had Paul successfully come to terms with his own impending death? The answer I reached was that the neurosurgeon had never truly accepted his demise. He was afraid of leaving everything behind: his work, his wife, and his daughter. But he was also happy in the fact that he felt such immense fear of death, as such a strong emotion was an indication that his life was fulfilling and worth living. In the same way, we as Andover students have a need to

recognize that what causes our fear of death is not our studies or our achievements but the parts of our lives that make it valuable, like our friends, family, and passions.

There are also a couple of other ways that we can deal with the idea of death. One such attitude that we can choose to adopt is that death makes life meaningless. But such a nihilistic point of view only acts as an excuse to avoid life's struggles and is a temporary and impractical rejection of death. To ignore death is to demean the value of life. Not only this, but to belittle death is also to deny humanity of the only universal experience that unites us. Death is the only ubiquitous ordeal that applies to every individual without exception or discrimination. It unites us in more ways than one: in the emotion of grief, through a shared fear, and as an equalizing factor among all humans that transcends any social, cultural, or economic divides. For many, religion is their guide in their rumination on death. Faith is a framework that uses the universalizing feature of death to unite people under a common belief that relieves their anxiety and apprehension regarding death. As a result, the vast majority of religions

deal with the idea of death in their own ways, whether that be through the existence of an afterlife or objectives to complete during one's life to earn peace after death. Some turn to philosophy, relationships, or purpose to reflect upon mortality. For Andover students, driven by expectation and accomplishment, the acknowledgement of death can be in the form of a reminder to ourselves that the purpose that propels our lives forward is not praise or triumph but our ultimate happiness. Our own fear of death should not be interpreted as a detriment towards our mentality, but evidence that we are on a journey of happiness. The certainty of death assures us that it is okay for us to pursue fulfillment rather than achievement.

My lamp would not have been nearly as bright as it was if it had been lit during the day. The noise of the rushing cars was never so prominent and disruptive when the sun came up, and people began driving to work. There is only light because there is darkness. While cliché, it is one of the few universal truths that has stood the test of time. Likewise, without death, there is no life. The exclusivity and worth of life are derived from its converse, death. Thus, our goal in life should not be to avoid or ignore the concept of mortality, but rather to recognize that we should create something worth living the limited time we have. Now, when I lie in bed, I still think about my death. I imagine that it might be peaceful, on a white bed surrounded by loved ones. I worry that it might be abrupt, like a sudden car accident on my way to school. Either way, nothing has changed in the fact that I am still afraid of death. Only, I now have learned to appreciate my fear as proof that my life is one worth dying for.

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Rothko in Iran: The Diplomatic Power of Art

RANIA ALI-SVEDSÄTER



A. TSAO / THE PHILLIPIAN

In 2015, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMOCA) unveiled a powerful array of Mark Rothko works in a temporary exhibition, providing a startling reminder of the cultural vibrancy that characterized Iran during the 1970s. The paintings, including "Sienna, Orange Black on Dark Brown," and "No.2 (Yellow Center)," were brought out from an underground storage vault after decades, which indeed preserved their well-kept status, even prompting the lead curator to remark that the can-

In our day and age, the possibility of such an exhibition resurfacing seems wistful, as Iran's future hangs in the precipice of further instability, and its relationship with West appears to be in decline.

vases were "in better condition than similar ones in the West." Immediately, the exhibition attracted great fascination and



HARRY ZHOU / THE PHILLIPIAN

respect among various international critics, curators, and artists, many of whom interpreted it as a powerful yet discreet recollection of Iran's complex relationship with the West, as well as its own artistic fluency and national artists. In our day and age, the possibility of such an exhibition resurfacing seems wistful, as Iran's future hangs in the precipice of further instability, and its relationship with the West appears to be in decline. Nonetheless, as art has eased tensions between such powers in the past, it may be useful to consider it a tool for future negotiations and resolutions.

Titled "Towards the Ineffable," the exhibition was curated through a partnership between Iranian filmmaker Farah Javaherian and the then artistic di-

rector of the Fondazione Prada in Milan, Germano Celant, who recently passed away in 2020. Grounded in its cross-cultural partnership, the exhibition offered a balanced perspective on Iranian and Western art, compounded by its intentional dual focus on the likes of Rothko, Pollock, and Gauguin, alongside the famed Iranian artist Farideh Lashai. Indeed, the exhibition marked the first collaboration between Iranian and non-Iranian contributors in over three decades since the revolution, perhaps offering a beacon of hope at the intersection of cultures.

For context, the featured collection of Western art had been amassed in the 1970s by Farah Pahlavi, the shah's wife and the artistically inclined em-

press of Iran. Previously, Iran lacked an adequate network of galleries and exhibition spaces for contemporary artists to exhibit their work, as existing venues were typically limited to classical Iranian art, which did not welcome abstraction

In a world ridden with emotional wars and divergent interests, art prevails as an intermediary that can inspire and sustain dialogue between separate cultures.

and other novel techniques to the same extent. Recognizing the value of international exposure and seeking to cultivate a more open and contemporary internal platform for artists, Farah Pahlavi commissioned two revered Iranian architects to design the TMOCA. Upon its completion, artists in Iran felt newly compelled and secure to display their contemporary pieces, positively shifting the nation's artistic atmosphere in an ample direction to impress various foreign collectors and dealers. As the influence of the TMOCA grew and an increasing number of external voices identified Iran's mission to grow and expand its creative voice, artworks by Picasso, Van Gogh, Rothko, and Warhol were added to the museum's permanent collection. Achieved through partnerships with lead museum curators, such as Donna Stein at MoMA, the collection flourished into a powerhouse in its own right, on par with, and even superior to, those whose works it had previously been part of.

Rothko's presence in the exhibition reminds us of the current geopolitical situation and

Iran's tenuous relations with the West. Rothko's works are often seen as spiritual entities in themselves, with his interplay of color and subtle luminosity powerful enough to evoke a range of emotions and ideas. Indeed, during his lifetime, Rothko often refused to classify his art as representational, remaining steadfast in his mission to paint for the sake of painting, without the burden of overt political symbolism. Given the absence of political rhetoric in his works, Rothko's works in the collection align with art's subtle yet revolutionary ability to captivate the masses in times of struggle. By enabling the paintings to be transported, shared, and appreciated in the first place, the 2015 exhibition served as a reminder of the value of cross-cultural exchange.

In a world ridden with emotional wars and divergent interests, art prevails as an intermediary that can inspire and sustain dialogue between separate cultures. Across the entire breadth of human existence, art has not failed in sharing some level of impact on its viewers, sellers, and buyers, either by embracing incendiary themes such as war and political dispute or by rejecting them altogether to prioritize deeply spiritual and collective reactions. Art does not shy away from being a reliable source of expression, demonstrating that at the end of the day, we are all human, and all have our individual stories, desires and wants, even if they may be temporarily sheltered in a museum basement.

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The Education We Could Find in the Kitchen

ANDREW PARK



E. CHAI / THE PHILLIPIAN

Before coming to Andover, I would listen to my sister's stories about Andover. Amidst her complaints about the stuffy dorms during the spring, to the happiness she felt preparing for various dance events, one thing was pretty much constant: The food was meh. While I wasn't sure what that meant initially, I've come to understand it after my first year. Yet, for the sheer volume of food the Paresky Commons staff makes in a short time, it

(Cooking) reveals important values about food, the appreciation of agricultural labor, the decompression for stressed students, and the aiding into a sustainable individual, that are not visible when we were only passive consumers.

isn't unreasonable that the food isn't Michelin-level, and their work is deeply unappreciated in that context. Nevertheless, on top of the ambivalence of the

food's taste at Andover, this dissatisfaction could suggest we want more from our food than just its taste. The act of cooking provides exactly that. It reveals important values about food, the appreciation of agricultural labor, the decompression for stressed students, and the aiding into a sustainable individual, that are not visible when we are only passive consumers. In fact, in order to capitalize on the benefits of cooking, Andover should offer spaces for culinary exploration for students.

Cooking reveals the hidden physical demand in preparing food, pushing you to understand the hard work people do across the culinary spectrum, from agricultural labor to the preparation in places like Commons. When you start cooking, you start to see that the ingredients that make up dishes are genuinely from the earth, and need to be cultivated through human effort. The quality of these ingredients is thus directly related to the work that laborers, farmers, and other develop-

SHANNON CHISHOLM / THE PHILLIPIAN



to make food.

On the individual level, cooking offers forms of independence that we could benefit

As boarding students, it may be more difficult for us to realize the impact of our spending habits, and learning to cook could help with the desires can be ameliorated with cooking.

from. Firstly, in response to the rising costs of living, knowing how to cook your own food could offer important financial independence. When you cook for yourself, you often save money by not eating out or ordering food. As boarding students, it may be more difficult for us to realize the impact of

especially if it's unique to your family and not common. These desires can be ameliorated with cooking.

While not its main use, cooking can also be a form of creativity and an extension for discovery. After learning the basics of cooking, many often ditch the land of recipes and use "feeling" to make food, or even try new ideas. For example, if you like a spicy numbing sensation from a spice like Sichuan peppercorns, and also like the savory background of a carbonara, why not try incorporating them? Additionally, when you cook, you deal with the process of how a certain dish is made, which usually is related to the culture that it comes from. For example, many stew-based dishes need to be cooked for a pretty long time because the less tender cuts of meat need to be tenderized. The reason they use less tender cuts of meat is that the people who developed the dish often only

This is the difference between just eating a dish and cooking it; you get to see the process that has been passed throughout history. When we just eat it, it feels more like a disconnected product, and we are unaware of what inspired or even forced the creation of the food.

had access to tougher meat, a problem solved by cooking it long enough for the collagen to break down.

Furthermore, cooking helps us visualize the hardship past humans had to go through, who developed our food. Learning to cook what once came from peasants extends the experience from just another meal to a realization of the resourcefulness of the people who came before us. This is the difference between just eating a dish and cooking it; you get to see the process that has been passed throughout history. When we just eat it, it feels more like a disconnected product, and we are unaware of what inspired or even forced the creation of the food.

Despite our limited free time and current kitchen restrictions, the potential for culinary enrichment at Andover remains a vital, untapped resource for those of us feeling the weight of the term. By allowing the exploration of the culinary landscape, Andover would allow us to learn about the personal agency and empathy that appear when cooking becomes a natural part of life. Similar to how we stretch our intellectual capabilities when we learn about complex topics in our classes, this would allow us to stretch our culinary boundaries, skills, likes, and relationship with it. Ultimately, the best part of this lesson is the conclusion: after the work is done, you get to sit down and finally taste the discovery for yourself.

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

Cooked Beyond Relief

COLIN LEE

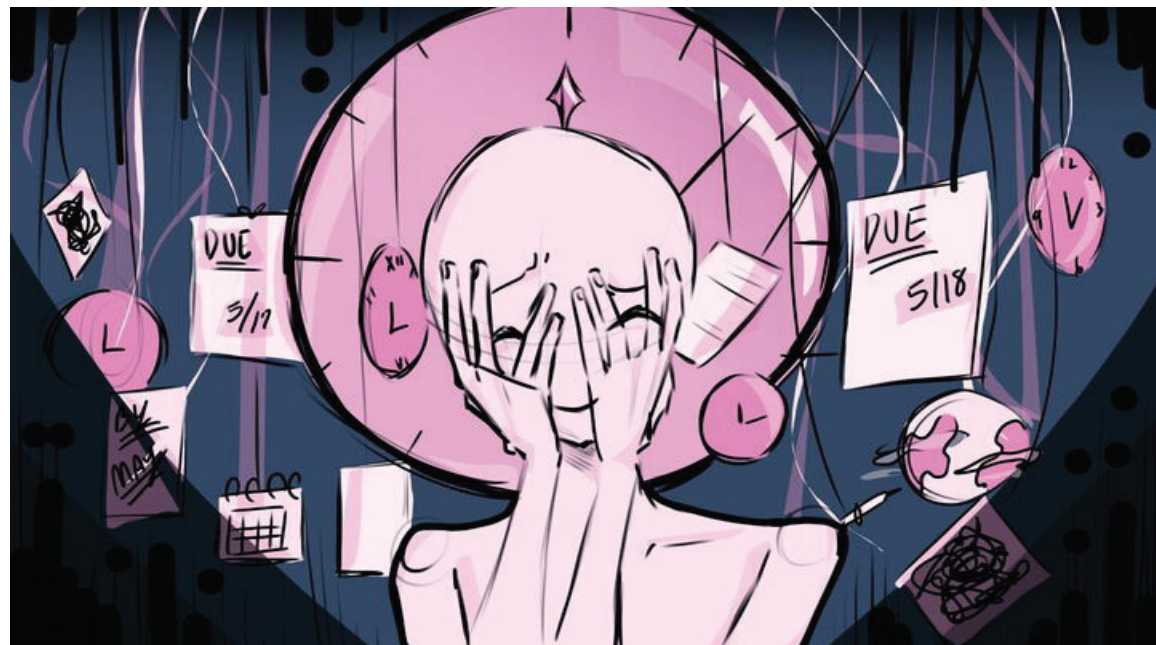


A. BAETEN-RUFFO / THE PHILLIPIAN

I watched a YouTube video by Kurzgesagt, an animated educational channel, on the impending doom of Germany due to its aging population and lack of infrastructure to encourage new families. I remembered watching a video by them years ago on the general fertility crisis, as well as one last year on how South Korea had passed the point of no return. Literally everybody saw this coming, and yet it hasn't been given enough attention to be fixed. It reminded me of the procrastini-

Situations where problems seem too large to fully comprehend seem to be a universal experience, for entire nations, as well as Andover students.

nation I see among students. I highlight cases like this where the stakeholder and the party in control are the same. Situations where problems seem too large to fully comprehend seem to be



CARINA PAIK / THE PHILLIPIAN

a universal experience, for entire nations, as well as Andover students. I believe the path to improvement as a society begins with intentional awareness, in our choices as individuals and roles in our communities.

In terms of academics, I think becoming tunnel-visioned in the moment is a problem emphasized at Andover, given how it rewards planning rather than improvisation: courses, clubs, and stories for applications. As a result, the days pass smoothly for most, with an onslaught of assignments before a brief reprieve during the weekends. On the other hand, those who have not developed this habit of programming are often playing catch-up: I often see people, most notably lowerclassmen, resign themselves to an unnecessary all-nighter, where they are aware that they have a massive task before them, like an ominous figure in the mist, but do not comprehend it thoroughly enough to plan out its execution over multiple days. So they wait until the last moment, where the nebulous future condenses into a long and exhausting night of scrambling.

Perhaps it's reflective of the nature of untamed human thought, and action requires the alignment of the thoughts in your mind on the task before you. The part of you that wants to scroll or snack or whatever else concedes to the impending doom before you. On a personal level, acknowledging these realities early on is a trainable skill: focus. However, on a group or even national scale, people often lack the imagination to acknowledge the scale of the problems before them. Politicians think of climate change as a facet of the political campaign instead of the apocalyptic threat it actually is. Fittingly, our society thinks the same way. The problems are too large to believe unless they arrive right in front of us.

As students, we can run an all-nighter and scrape by; a lot of our work in our junior and freshman years can be solved within twelve hours. But this idea becomes less and less true as we get older. I, as well as some friends, took our first APs, and cramming did not go well. More seriously, my grandfather had a big heart attack earlier this year.

We lucked out, and he squeaked by, but the severity of his declining health hadn't struck me until then. I think part of the reason it didn't hit me before was

Like many of our more serious problems, it lived like a forgotten candle on the windowsill, burning silently, with the only attention you pay it a small voice in the back of your head, nagging you about the nearly depleted wick and the glass that threatens to shatter.

that it was uncomfortable to think about and I had nothing reminding me of it. Like many of our more serious problems, it lived like a forgotten candle on the windowsill, burning silently, with the only attention you pay it a small voice in the back of your head, nagging you

about the nearly depleted wick and the glass that threatens to shatter.

On greater stages, by the time

Even as their effects become increasingly tangible, they almost certainly won't be addressed until they absolutely have to.

these problems are immediate enough to fully grab our society's attention, they are often too late to fix. The population crisis I mentioned in my opening is an example alongside climate change. Even as their effects become increasingly tangible, they almost certainly won't be addressed until they absolutely have to. I don't mean the last moment before the damage is irreversible, that was a decade ago, but once there is literally nothing else to possibly discuss but the ending world.

I do not write this piece advocating for monumental change or impact, but the acknowledgement of the value in awareness. That change begins when its necessity is accepted. I hope that we can realize that the skills in managing ourselves that we develop at Andover can someday be expanded to our roles in directing the actions of our communities.

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Student Athletes Reflect on Positive Impacts of Funding Changes

Continued from A1, Column 5

contribute to the House Discretionary Fund. And that just means that people can make gifts, and all the dorms have access to the funds. It's that simple. There's no strict control over it, but there is oversight of it," said Esty.

Girls Junior Varsity Squash player Danielle Han '28 reflected on how funding has positively impacted her team's facilities and equipment.

"I feel like our courts are definitely one of the best, if not the best in our league. They're really spacious, and you can tell that the school has put a lot of money, effort, and time into planning the courts. Also, because we have such a big squash community, it makes sense for us to have such a big facility. We have squash cannons, they launch squash balls at you, but we had them last year as well. But not every school has those. In comparison to other schools, we honestly have good equipment," said Han.

Ultimate has also benefited from increased resources this year. Samantha Gong '28, a member of Girls Varsity Ultimate, compared the team's current equipment and field access to previous seasons.

"We have a sufficient amount of pennies and cones. We were also able to hand out every single kid who didn't have a disc, a disc to practice on their own time. I have a school disc from last year, but all the new kids got one this year. So that's pretty nice. And we also got some new designs on them. So I think they're new. We have two fields this year and two full fields. We had that last year, but we never trained on two. It allowed us to definitely do more scrimmages, more full field scrimmages," said Gong.

As part of Boys Varsity Golf, Junu Lee '29 reflected on the quality and new improvements made to the facilities over the academic year, as well as new team merchandise.

"We have two Trackmans, they're pretty expensive. One hasn't been

working for a few months, but now it's fixed. We also got a new screen. And we practice at a nice course every day," said Lee.

Lee continued, "We are getting some clothes and travel bags from a brand called Holderness and Bourne. One of the founders graduated from Andover, and this year he decided to present us with some clothes. [We] haven't gotten them yet, but I think they're gonna be nice. We're getting two hoodies, two polos, and a travel bag. The bags have our names on them."

Students Share Appreciation for Seniors' Imparted Wisdom

Continued from A1, Column 3

forcing myself to do it," said Lazar.

In an interview with *The Phillipian*, Lazar described the value of being honest with oneself and seizing the opportunity to act on self-interest.

"I want people to take away that it's okay to move away from what is sort of expected of you or what others think of you or who they think you are and just try new things, and if something makes you happy to just stick with that and not feel like you have to do something for someone else because at the end of the day, it's your life," said Lazar.

Oh shared his experience with facing two different sides of Andover by referring to "dan-jjan-dan-jjan," a Korean phrase referring to a mixture of sweet and salty.

"Lately, I've been thinking a lot about what Andover life tasted like, and somehow, it tastes exactly like that. Dan-jjan-dan-jjan. Sweet, then salty, then sweet again, over and over for three years. Here's what I've come to believe. The best things in life are never just one flavor. We spent so much time trying to make things clean and uncomplicated, wanting to win without the loss, the joy without the awkwardness, the

perfect grade without the late night spiral that got us there," said Oh.

Kayden Robinson '29 shared his thoughts on this metaphor, appreciating how Oh's speech captivated the audience through the mention of food. He mentioned how all of the speakers motivated him to open his mind to certain aspects of the Andover experience.

"I thought it was a very interesting hook. It really got people engaged, and it caught everyone off guard that one of the Senior remarks would be about food... The speakers definitely emphasized the importance of not solely focusing on academics. That changed the way I was thinking, especially because this past week I've had a lot of tests and been focused mainly on academics. Hearing the Seniors talk about the fun parts of the school reminded me to pay attention to those experiences too," said Robinson.

To conclude, Ezeike reflected on a letter left by a Nigerian student in the early 2000s that she found hidden beneath the floorboards under Double Brick House's recently-removed fireplace. Ezeike explained how the experiences she shared with the student led Ezeike to take inspiration from her legacy.

"It's weird to think about all the stuff that

has happened in the same spot you were in right now. In the same room, we were putting this letter under there, and now you are taking it out. Then they gave us some advice. Don't be cliquy. Don't change yourself to be like other people. You are here because you're special. Don't doubt yourself and be friendly to everyone. But it wasn't until I sat down to write this that I understood why her letter mattered so much to me. It was because of the connections it created. The connection between me and her. Between myself and who I hope to become. Between their Double Brick in 2005 and ours in 2023," said Ezeike.

Means Essay Finalists Explain Contents of Respective Works

Continued from A1, Column 3

astronomy. We found that it was really tricky to stargaze on campus, because even though the light pollution is really low, there's dorms and there's street lamps, it's bright outside. I had the bright idea of, hey, what if we went into the graveyard, because there's no lights around the graveyard. Before that, I'd actually never gone to the graveyard before...It was kind of spooky at first, but it was also, eventually, really pretty. So I decided to write an essay about that," said Lin.

Kang spoke on her experience writing her piece, which reflected on guardianship in the wake of a car accident and family illness.

"While I was trying to write something for that, I was sitting on my mom's couch at like 3 am, and it's late at night when all those memories and emotions come. I started writing spontaneously about the car accident because that's what I was thinking about the most during that time. I [wrote] a very rough piece. It wasn't for the Means Essay, it was just for a keepsake and to remember what happened and the lessons I learned. Then after that the Means Essay came out and I was like might as well submit to that, because this is what really matters to me. I polished it and added some of my childhood memories to make it a more interesting and compelling piece," said Kang.

Traditionally, the English Department's teaching fel-

lows select the finalists for the Means Essay Prize. Jessica Hoffman, Teaching Fellow in English, helped judge the essays this year and shared advice for students looking to submit their work in the future.

"If you are a Lower, really lean into the creative non-fiction personal essay component that English 200 has every fall. But even if you are not a Lower or if you were once a Lower and are now an Upper or a Senior, [take] the time to go back and look at the writing that you've done in the past and spend more time with it," said Hoffman.

As Friday nears, Finalist Bruce Ru '28 emphasized the vulnerability it takes to declaim a piece in front of others, especially when a work is so deeply rooted in one's identity and lived experiences.

"I'm talking about the history of Australian racism or the white Australian policy or racial assimilation from a third person. It's still a very important issue, but there's not that aspect of vulnerability and personal experience that has to necessarily go into it. Having to write about something that's so sensitive and complex is not an easy thing. It takes a lot of nuance. You don't get it right on the first try. And also the ability to open yourself to others and say, this is me. This is an imperfect life that I've lived so far but it's worth hearing. Once you open yourself up for that vulnerability, people respond very well. But to take that first step is incredibly hard," said Ru.

Students Discuss SOTA Data

Continued from A1, Column 5

considered themselves middle or upper-middle class. Philip Molina '28, who looks at this statistic each year, explained how it reveals differences in student experiences and perspectives.

"There were definitely people in the higher tax brackets that thought they were middle class when by America's standards, they would be upper class. There is something to be said, though, about the fact that we have a large amount of international students. As someone from New York City, which has a higher yearly income for you to be considered wealthy would be harder because of the high cost of living. If you're from a more rural state or an international country that may not be so economically strong, a lower income could make you upper class or could make you lower," said Molina.

Molina continued, "I do not think that people who do not know their private income are automatically privileged, that they don't know the number because money isn't an issue for their family..."

It is totally [a] case-by-case basis. Some people just don't have those conversations because their family chooses to withhold that number or avoid the topic entirely."

This year marks a shift in student reception of Head of School

Raynard Kington, with 46.3 percent of students expressing approval of his work, a decrease from 55.6 percent last year. Azul Cabrera '28 suggested that some students, especially upperclassmen, may be more critical about his position than others, contributing to this decrease.

"I am pretty neutral about the Head of School. I've been here for two years, and he's been the only Head of School, so I don't have a point of reference. Maybe the reason why it goes down by grade is because people have been with him for longer. They've experienced stuff that might make them more cynical of the head of school and had more time to experience the flaws of him," said Cabrera.

This year, 58.0 percent of respondents believe that drug use is normalized at Andover, down from 67.7 percent reported in the 2025 SOTA. Despite the improvement, Molina believes that there is potential for work to be done, particularly with the advent of the Wellness Council.

"The Wellness Council might be able to help change our drug use culture. I'm really excited to see what the wellness council does. I deeply admire these students who are working towards it because it is such an important goal for Andover. There is no one better to lead it than a council of students themselves who understand the culture here and life and can do something about it," said Molina.

Students Reflect on Potential Changes to the Advising System

DINA NAMJOO & WINSTON WU

Talks of structural changes to the advising system, where an advisor would also serve as their advisees' point person, have recently begun to circulate across campus. This model is similar to the current system for day student advisors.

This question of expanding an advisor's role is pioneered by the Learning Steering Committee. Deputy Head of School Merilee Mardon, who helps lead the committee, outlined its history, goals, and detailed aspects of the potential change.

"The Learning Steering Committee was put together in the spring of 2023 and was charged with making recommendations for improvement to the school over the next couple of decades. So, for the past three years, that committee has been meeting with students, with adults, surveys, et cetera, gathering a lot of information, and one of the recommendations from that

committee is to have the advisor be the point person for all students. Is there a vote? No. Is it going to happen? Maybe, but that's not happening for next year," said Mardon.

Mardon continued, "It's about wanting to provide more consistent support for students and families. Our system that we have at Andover doesn't exist at other schools. And one of the features of it is that sometimes students have different go-to adults every year. And that can feel confusing for families and even confusing for students. One of the promises of the advisor-point-person is that students and families would really get to know their person on campus."

Despite the change's goal of fostering further connections, Darius Conover '27 emphasized the importance of having a point person in the dorm.

"I feel a little closer to my point person than my advisor, even though my point person's only been my point person for a year now, because I see them every day in the dorm, and I'll

just see them around even not in the context of being a point person. [With the change], I would definitely feel less close than I do now to my point person...being able to see them in a context outside of school, it's not during the school day, really, I think that's an important thing," said Conover.

Lilia Li '28 echoed Conover's sentiment, noting a preference for a divide between advisors and point people due to their divergent roles in student life. She also noted that gender plays a role in the approachability of campus adults.

"If I'm in a serious situation, which I'm usually in my dorm for, I want someone that I can go to directly. Proximity matters. When it comes to advising, an advisor is more for academic purposes and deciding classes or making changes to your schedule, while a point person I feel like you can go to from all your personal problems. So I feel like that's a good divide between those two things, and I think that it should stay that way. I'd leave [the advising

system] as is," said Li.

She continued, "I'm equally close to both my point person and my advisor, but also my point person is a female while my advisor is a male, and when it comes to talking to my point person, I feel like it's much easier to bring up topics that I wouldn't normally feel comfortable about talking to my advisor."

Conversely, Emerson Davis '29 expressed support for the proposed change and felt that consolidating the two roles would give students a more complete support system. She also pointed to the potential benefit for advisory groups themselves.

"I think that this change is good and it's something that should happen... it would be good to have a more centralized system, or person rather, that has access to everything instead of just one side or the other, academically and with the rest of your life here. Compared to my advisor, I feel closer to my point person because she is someone who I can talk to in the dorm about more things surrounding my

life, whereas my advisor is only once a week for academics," said Davis.

She continued, "It's important to stay with the same group of kids throughout your Andover experience. I think it creates a small community that is a sort of source to rely back on whenever a student is going through a hard time or otherwise, and I think having that same group of people can definitely make it more of a uniting force, rather than just meeting once a week."

Mardon said that the school is leaning towards this change, but expressed that some adjustments may be made to the final proposal.

"Right now we're in this process of trying to think about implementation and people's worries, and is there a way for implementation to address some of the worries without giving up the principles of the recommendation? So we might fine tune things. I think we're leaning toward the change, but with an open mind to tweak in ways that it feels more comfortable for the community," said Mardon.

10 Questions with Micheal Kawooya '26

REPORTING BY IAN S. KIM & HELEN XIONG

Micheal Kawooya '26 served as Editor in Chief (EIC) of The Phillipian, vol. CXLVIII. Before becoming EIC, he was an Editor for the Commentary section. Throughout his time at Andover, Kawooya has emphasized creative expression in many forms. Drawn to singing and performing, he has participated in community theater, recorded his own album, and is a member of The Fidelio Society (Fidelio). Kawooya is originally from Columbia, South Carolina.

When did you start writing for *The Phillipian* and why?

I started *The Phillipian* my freshman year in the News section. I did it for a couple weeks, and I didn't love news writing at the time. I distinctly remember I would have interviews scheduled over the weekend, and I was like, this is taking too much of my time. I quit in the middle of an ASM assignment, and I didn't think I'd return to the paper. What ended up happening was two upperclassmen that I was pretty close with, one was my EBI Upper and one was the director for a show I was in, both talked about the paper really positively. My EBI Upper was, at the time, an Editor for the Commentary section. She encouraged me to join Commentary, which is the section that I ended up writing for most of my time at Andover.

What motivated you to become Editor in Chief?

Although I had done *The Phillipian* for two years by the time I was an upper, I wasn't so focused on the paper in terms of the grand scheme of things I was doing at Andover. When August rolled around, the Editor in Chief [of *The Phillipian*, vol. CXLVII], Louisa Carter [25], emailed all the new Associates that there's a meeting to help you get started in your new positions at the beginning of the year. [I was] like, oh, I forgot I'm a part of this. But my entire mood towards the paper changed from, I like this and it's fun, to, this could be potentially really impactful to me. That shift happened when I went into the Newsroom as an Editor. When you are a writer, you submit something at the beginning of the week and it goes into paper at the end of the week. For the first time, I was the middleman in that process, and it was so fascinating to me. *The Phillipian* has such a special community on campus, and it feels like you are connected to so many people who have passed through the paper before you.

Were there any challenges you encountered as Editor in Chief?

It was definitely an interesting experience in terms of leadership amongst your own peers. When you have a hard decision in front of you, you feel like it is the biggest problem that you ever faced, and that it can impact so many different people around you. Learn-



CINDY ZHOU/THE PHILLIPIAN

ing to trust yourself and your instincts was a really big challenge. Because the paper is independent, the EIC is the last set of eyes on it before it goes out on Fridays... There were times I found it difficult adjusting to a position where you have to ask adults and administrators tough questions about all these different policies and things that are happening. Especially coming from a regular student, [it made for] a different power dynamic between adults and students.

How would you describe your experience as a member of Fidelio?

I've always liked singing, and it's one of the things I do amongst several others on campus. Fidelio became so important to me, because *The Phillipian* becomes consuming when you're in Upper Management. When I was really stressed about the paper, there were days when I really needed an outlet, a space that is so different from the Newsroom, so that I can come back with a refined perspective. I'd go

[to Fidelio] on Thursdays, right before going back to the Newsroom and finishing the paper. It was really important for me to have that space, to sing for fun and perform for fun.

What does music mean to you?

Music is very big and broad, but it's one of the most important things in my life. That's a very strong thing to say, but I'm always listening to something, humming a melody, tapping my foot, even if people don't notice it. It is very important to me, and it is one of the easiest ways for me to ground myself if I'm ever feeling overwhelmed or stressed.

When did you first begin to enjoy performing?

When I was very young, I did musicals at my elementary school [because] they threw everyone in the grade into the musical. I remember that someone who'd seen the show told my dad I should audition for Aladdin Jr. at our community theater. None of us knew what Aladdin

was, and we've never heard of this movie. He called the community theater, tried to sign me up, and completely butchered the pronunciation of Aladdin. The sweet southern lady on the other end of the phone was equally confused. We couldn't understand her, and she couldn't understand us. That was when I was maybe seven or eight, and that was the first show I did for community theater. I did so many shows each year, every year until I came to Andover.

Do you also record and create music?

I did, in middle school. I got super busy in high school, but that's something I definitely want to go back to. This is another way that music is super important to me. It's an outlet for expression, and making music is a really effective way of doing that. It's been really helpful for me in the past. I don't journal or meditate or anything, I'm not very good at doing any of those, but I think that making music is my equivalent of that.

How do you think making music is different from performing music?

Making music is definitely more intimate. When you make art, you offer yourself up to be perceived, whether that's criticism or praise. That's probably the distinction between when you make something versus when you perform it. When you perform it, there's a degree of separation. Although your performance can also be perceived, I don't think it's as intimate of an experience.

Do you have a favorite book?

I just read this book called *Elsewhere* by Alexis Schaitkin. It's about this remote town of people who live with an affliction, that every mother eventually turns into air and disappears. This girl is raised in a society where she's expected to become a mother, and is very much looking forward to becoming a mother and to ultimately disappear. Her mother disappeared, and every mother before that disappeared. They don't understand the source of the phenomenon, but it's so interesting. What happens to her when she ultimately gets to that point, and is it that people are actually turning into air? Is there something larger happening? It was so cool and it was such a good book.

Do you have any advice for Andover students?

Some of my most important relationships on this campus have been with adults, and there's so much wisdom amongst the adults on this campus. It's so easy to go through a high school for four years and miss out on all of that. Yes, relationships with your peers are super important, but making sure that you have your own network available is important too. I've met them in such random ways. That's probably the beauty of it. It doesn't have to be the adult team you have listed in BlueLink, because those aren't people you've necessarily found for yourself. I love my house counselors. I also have [Instructor in History and Advisor to *The Phillipian*, Tracy] Ainsworth and [Neil Fater, Advisor to *The Phillipian*], and [Administrative Assistant Julie] Powers in the Dean of Studies Office. I have all these different people on campus who help you feel more seen and whole and supported.

Gong cha

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HERE AND THERE: THE WORLD RIGHT NOW

REPORTING BY JUNIPER KLOCK & JUDY LIU

Politics: "The View" and a Legal Battle for Free Speech

"The View," one of America's most popular news and talk shows according to the New York Times, is currently at the center of a free speech battle. Featuring a diverse panel of multi-generational women who discuss current "hot topics," the show conducts interviews with prominent figures, celebrities and politicians, aiming to have people with a variety of political views. As the show has gotten more popular, it has come to hold significant political power. Conservative politicians and pundits have accused "The View," according to CBS News, of violating the "equal time rule," which requires broadcast stations that interview one political candidate to give equal airtime to all other candidates for the same office. President Trump, who used to be a regular guest on the show, and his administration are advocating for the show's cancellation. According to The New York Times, the Federal Communications Commission has been investigating the show for months for violating broadcasting rules; in turn, ABC has accused the FCC of violating first amendment rights and are prepared to take the case to the Supreme Court. The New York Times has described it as the most aggressive posture taken yet by a television network toward the Trump administration.

War/Conflict: Crucial Strait of Hormuz Remains Blocked

The Strait of Hormuz is a waterway between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. Because it provides the only sea passage from the Persian Gulf to the open ocean, it's one of the world's most important maritime passages for ships carrying natural gas, fertilizer, and about a fifth of the world's oil supply. Shipping traffic has been largely blocked by Iran via drones, missiles, and boat attacks since the U.S. and Israel launched an air war against Iran two and a half months ago. In return, according to The New York Times, in the last month the U.S. Navy has intercepted and turned around 58 commercial ships trying to leave or enter Iranian ports.

The Strait of Hormuz also serves as one of the world's busiest oil shipping channels and according to BBC, about 20 percent of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) usually passes through the strait and hostilities have sent global fuel prices soaring. According to The New York Times, Britain and France have said they are planning a "multinational coalition" to ensure safe passage for ships in the strait once the conflict ends; and according to the Wall Street Journal, President Trump launched "Project Freedom" on May 4, 2026 to escort merchant ships on the Strait of Hormuz but claims that he is temporarily pausing the project to see whether the U.S. and Iran

can come to an agreement. As of now, some countries are relying on LNG shipment from the U.S. and West Africa to alleviate the shortages and waiting on a response from Iran.

Public Health: Hantavirus Outbreak

Following an outbreak of the hantavirus on the Dutch cruise ship MV Hondius, passengers have flown to their home countries. The current mortality rate of this strain of hantavirus is estimated around 30 to 40 percent, with three passengers of the ship having died, reports The New York Times. According to The New York Times, the World Health Organization projected a "limited" spread of the virus if public health measures were implemented. Due to the rarity of the disease and unlikelihood of person to person infections, the hantavirus is currently considered a minimal threat to public health, states Harvard Health Publishing; in fact, this strain of hantavirus, also known as Andes virus, is part of a rare but potentially deadly family of viruses transmitted primarily by wild rodents through their urine, droppings, and saliva. According to the CDC, while there is no specific cure, early medical intervention is critical because symptoms can worsen rapidly, progressing from fatigue, fever, and muscle aches into hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS), a severe and potentially life-threatening lung disease.

Technology: A Cyberattack on Canvas

On Thursday, May 7, a data breach at the educational platform Canvas impacted almost 9,000 schools and 275 million people, according to Ransomware.live, a website dedicated to tracking the activity of ransomware groups and their victims. The hacking group known as ShinyHunters threatened to leak the personal information of students, teachers, and staff, exposing the vulnerability of student information, states The Washington Post; the hacked information is now safe, according to The New York Times, as Instructure, Canvas's parent company, eventually struck a deal with the hackers. Instructure had reportedly received prior warnings. Earlier this month, according to Ransomware.live, a message threatened that unless contact was made by May 6, 2026, stolen information would be leaked and additional "digital" disruptions would follow. According to The Washington Post, the ShinyHunters group is known for its strategy of stealing data and threatening to publish it unless victims comply with ransom demands. The Washington Post notes that this incident underscores society's growing dependence on technology that is often insufficiently protected at a time when cyberattacks are growing more common.

Culture: 2026 Met Gala Raises Record 42 Million Amid Tech Funding Surge

Widely recognized as the most prestigious and glamorous fashion event, the Met Gala takes place every spring. This year, with the theme "Fashion is Art," the gala raised a record-breaking \$42 million USD, a significant increase from \$31 million in 2025, according to Fortune. The event hosts some of the wealthiest, most powerful, and most influential people in the world for a night of raising money for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute. Since Anna Wintour, the former Editor-in-Chief of "Vogue" Magazine, took over the gala in 1995, she has significantly increased its fundraising power by transforming the gala into a fusion of fashion, Hollywood, and business stars, notes Time. The New York Times reported that individual tickets climbed to approximately 100,000 dollars from 75,000 dollars last year. Now, in 2026, the Met Gala is reflecting the growing dominance of tech sponsors and figures. According to Fortune, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and his wife, Lauren Sánchez Bezos, were the primary financial contributors to both the exhibition and the event with a reported donation of 10 million. Mark Zuckerberg made a quiet first appearance, along with a surge of attendance from lead tech executives. Additionally, Amazon, Meta, OpenAI, and Snapchat all purchased tables for 350,000 each.

Advanced Placement Exams Prompt Mixed Experiences

REPORTING BY SOPHIA TOLOKH & NICCOLO LEE-SUK

Over the past two weeks, Advanced Placement (AP) exams, assessments issued by the College Board for potential college credit, were administered on campus. While Andover is not an "AP school," meaning it does not follow the AP College Board curriculum, it does teach three specific APs: AB Calculus, BC Calculus, and Statistics. Nonetheless, many students sign up for exams across a variety of disciplines.

Philip Meng '26

"I signed up for Physics C: Mechanics, Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism, and Computer Science A. I'm only taking Computer Science A. I had initially signed up for all three because I thought it more of an option than anything. If I had enough time to prepare for those exams, I would take all of them, but my spring term course load has been higher than I expected, so I'll probably only take Computer Science A because I've already learned that material on my own, and it also provides me with credit for college."

Grace Zheng '28

"I think [the school] provides adequate information about [APs] going in. My one complaint is the small desks. So many people's laptops fell off. The desks were way too small. Especially for AP Chemistry. There were so many papers, and they were falling off my desk. And my pencils kept rolling off. It was distracting. I wouldn't say it made too much of a difference, but it's a convenience thing. Maybe I could have saved a bit more time, because you use the reference sheet and your calculator [a lot]. It was annoying to have everything out of place and stuff falling off."

Kaya Mangani '27

"I wanted to take [AP French] to see what I would get. If I didn't do well, I knew that I could always retake it again the following year. So I told my French teacher last year, Mr. Hughes when I was in French 304, that I was taking the exam and he had experience previously grading exams, so he offered to grade some of my sample responses. So if you go on the AP website, they have past years' exams. So I did some of those and then I sent them to him and then he graded them for me and gave me feedback."

Natalie Giancola '28

"[CHI520] wasn't really designed to prepare us for the AP. I would say that it's AP level, and that when I was doing my self-study, I found that there was a lot of overlap, but it wasn't designed for the AP test. I had to do a lot of self-study. It was fun because a lot of the people who were taking the AP were in my dorm. We had quite a few late night study sessions together, especially the night before the exam. It was a little bit chaotic. It involved me falling off my chair at around 10:50 p.m. So that was great. I would say it was pretty fun. It definitely helped alleviate some of the stress too."

Woojin Oh '29

"I took AP BC Calculus [after taking] MTH595 with Mr. DoBa. I feel like the AP test was actually easier than our in-class test. Shout out to Mr. DoBa for the good prep. We took two mock AP tests, which were actually part of the grade. We also had a full one to two weeks of just Mr. DoBa giving us mock AP exam material, like practice quizzes and practice tests to do in our own free time. Honestly, [the exam] was so much easier than the content that we were doing in class, so I felt pretty comfortable."

Nathan Chun '28

"I have taken French and BC Calculus, and I attempted to take Chemistry, but ran into some technical difficulties. There was some sort of issue on my laptop that was interfering with the Wi-Fi connection, and no one really figured out what it was. It could have been a Virtual Private Network or something, but I ended up bringing a different device for testing. I'm taking it during the late testing date... It speaks to the credibility of our curriculum that we don't need to use AP tests to the same degree or rely on them to the same degree."

Senior Celebration Dinner Features Olympic Guest Speaker Caroline Lind '02

NICCOLO LEE-SUK & TEDDY STEINERT

The Senior Celebration Dinner is an annual tradition that brings Andover Seniors together to share a meal with various Andover alumni and trustees. This year's dinner featured two-time Olympic gold medalist and alumna Caroline Lind '02, who attained the title of the #1 Female Rower from the International Rowing Federation in 2014. The keynote speaker and other various attendees at roundtables fostered an evening of discussion and connections amongst guests.

Naomi Mashburn '08, Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement, communicated that connections were among the primary goals of the Senior Celebration Dinner. Mashburn, whose work focuses primarily on alumni engagement through

the Student Alumni Representatives (STARS) program, elaborated on the opportunities offered by the event.

"The dinner is meant to feel welcoming and familial. We hope seniors find these conversations to easily cross generations and a variety [of] Andover experiences. We are so pleased that the Senior class attends in such high numbers, taking advantage of this special opportunity to meet with alumni who care deeply about this institution and who will serve as their network for years to come," said Mashburn.

Sophia Tabibian '26 commented on how the Senior Celebration Dinner represented something entirely different than the other Senior events.

"What made this event really special was that it was about forming bonds across different grades, and a lot of Senior events are focused on strength-

ening the bonds within your own grade. But it was special that this one was centered on that and also how [we are] going to pay this forward. How are we going to look at ourselves in the future, and who do we want to emulate? A lot of senior events are about endings. Whereas being an Andover alumni is just the beginning. We're entering a new chapter of Andover," said Tabibian.

Denys Tereshchenko '26 agreed with Tabibian's sentiment, and reflected on how the dinner offered Seniors a rare chance to gain perspective on life beyond Andover, even during the very busy final stretch of senior year.

"We can get more perspective on how we want to go moving forward, but also how we want to enter to go forward, which is harder to apply as a Senior because as a Senior, our focus is, especially in this stretch, we want to finish, we want to do all the stuff

that we've already set out to do," said Tereshchenko.

Tereshchenko added that the organization of the event allowed all students to meet and converse with alumni at their tables, creating a comfortable environment for conversation.

"It was cool because it was very nice that they shuffled [so] you structurally can't have an all students table because they already have a certain group table. You have as many alumni per table as many students. It's also nice that we managed to be able to choose as groups of students where to sit because that made the conversation flow more naturally," said Tereshchenko.

Tasha Bohorad '26 also commented on the event's atmosphere, stating that the dinner felt far more relaxed and conversational than she had initially expected. As a STARS member, Bohorad explained that she had en-

joyed listening to alumni's remarks and experiences with life at and beyond Andover.

"It did not feel awkward at all. I didn't feel like I was under a lot of pressure. It was just a conversation with my friends... [the alumni] were really fun to talk to. I've been doing stuff with alumni for at least two years now, since I was an upper, and I just love talking with them. I love hearing about their experiences as a student and sharing my experiences here. Seeing what they do now is really cool to me because a lot of people have conventional and unconventional paths," said Bohorad.

Guess Now It's Official, Hluma

I'm Getting a GAP and It's All Your Fault, Mom!

Konnor Fortini

A recent study by the Mother's Observation and Research Survey Enterprise (MORSE) shows that 94% of academic integrity violations occur within 72 hours of a mother's phone call about grades. But have you ever wondered why this is the case?

Today we will be investigating why Andover students use AI. Before today, the growing consensus was to get good grades to get into a good college, but let's be real, all of us except for 10 are probably not going to college. So, what's the real issue, you ask? That's easy: Mothers.

Through rigorous research by MORSE, we found that academic integrity violations decreased by 78% during mothers day, the only day when mothers are focused on themselves rather than their kids. Coincidentally, the quality of the History 300 paper decreased by the same percentage the same day, with typos, grammatical errors, and dark-web sources growing rapidly. One student was so absurdly horrendous at doing actual work after four years of AI writing every assignment that they didn't realize their 'interview' that they had been analyzing was from the previous night's SNL weekend update. The instructor, also restricted from using AI, realized how awful submissions were over the last year and recently requested an Abbot Grant that lists only "Ammonium Nitrate, 300 lbs."

We interviewed a History instructor about how Mother's Day impacted his students.

"I was looking at the Google Docs of the HSS300 papers and I found that the latest paragraphs were, pardon my French, complete dogshit. Right after a beautiful analysis on the impact of cheese in America, my student wrote something about 'dih cheese'. I don't even know what that is. Honestly, I would prefer grading AI writing than stuff like that. To the mothers out there: put more pressure on your kids, for my sake," he said.

Additionally, we asked an anonymous Upper about this phenomenon, who confirmed our suspicions.

"My mom usually texts me every 2 hours asking if I studied for my upcoming essay. I've started using AI just to have something to show her by 9 PM. But on Mother's Day, she literally forgot to remind me because "she was focused on having a good day." How dare she?! I had to actually write the essay myself at 3 AM and I already know I got a 4. Stupid Mom!" he said.

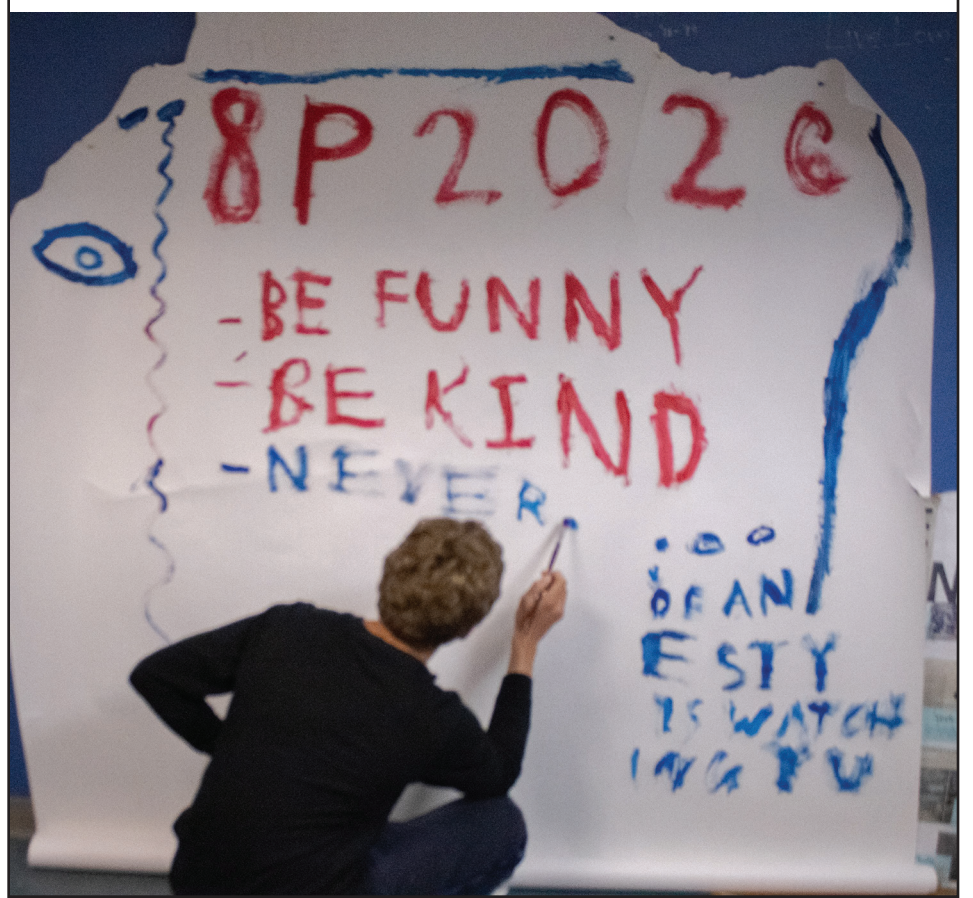
All of this has come to this final statement: **Mothers of Andover, let your kids get fours. It helps the GPA distribution <3.**

Spring Fling

Thiago Jollon

The Upper Spring Fling, whose purpose beyond Instagram photos is unknown, WAS this Friday. The day was specifically chosen to be on the cloudiest and rainiest day possible to really accentuate the Upper year experience. Thankfully, it's been proven by trustworthy sources (SOTA on *The Phillipian's* website) that one afternoon at Dr. Kington's house makes up for ten grueling weeks of the History 300 paper, college counseling meetings, class assassin, and all the homework for my other classes (Bio 100 and Math 340). While Lowerers are enjoying their last stress-free term and Juniors are hosting right-wing podcasts in the library basement, the Uppers have been slaving away. Never mind the Seniors, whose every waking moment is spent on the lawn, playing limbo with the admission rescission threshold.

Banksy Visits the Newsroom



THIAGO JOLLON/THE PHILLIPIAN

Remy Fights Hantavirus with Ratatouille

Claire Bancroft

It started out as a simple rumor: "Yo, have you heard about this hantavirus?" "Yeah, ts is crazy."

But the rumor kept spreading until the administration became worried.

The true turning point was when the Weekender's "Ratatouille" movie screening was cancelled due to a "concern for student health." It was an outrage! Students started freaking out over when they would be able to watch their favorite movie, Commons staff panicked over who would put out the nacho cheese that no one touches at the pasta bar, and Remy himself was sent spiraling.

The next day, however, the unbelievable happened.

From the Paul Revere basement, through a small crack in the wall, rats appeared. Hundreds of them trickled in, feasting on left-over crumbs littering the floor. And leading the whole pack was Remy; he had a tiny chef hat on, and a wooden spoon raised like a sword, ready to combat the haters and take over the commons menu. Remy's stampede of rats stormed Commons all at once. Faculty kids were tossed up in waves, lifted by thousands of hungry rats trying to find their way to the kitchen. One rat even landed on the head of a freshman, grabbing her hair and trying to steer her toward the salad bar.

As Remy and his team rounded up all of the faculty kids and transformed Paresky into a Parisian fine-dining establishment, students had their first tastes of his ratatouille.

Though initially skeptical, many students described it as 'life changing', moments before developing severe nausea.

The once-joke hantavirus rumour had evolved into full campus paranoia. First, crisp dap-ups disappeared. Then, hacky sack circles widened. And finally, the Gelb birds stopped their chirping, signaling the start of a Black Plague. Less than a week later, the entire campus had been excused from classes. Dr. Kington offered a Head of School Day for the "sickly" children. Andover, Massachusetts was now facing a full hantavirus epidemic.

While students sang Kumbaya in the Flagstaff Courtyard in hopes of getting rid of this terrible epidemic, the rats seemed perfectly fine. Remy continued mass-producing ratatouille for the increasingly overcrowded Sykes population, and the smell of his beautifully crafted dish continued to waft around campus.

Finally, though, the hantavirus case was solved. A day student who returned home after feeling Sick, suddenly felt better. The moment she returned to campus and took a single bite of Remy's signature dish, however, she immediately booked another appointment at Sykes.

Overheard on the Paths

"That was NOT water that came out of that rubber ducky."

"What's that on your shirt?"

"Good people can do very bad things."

"Did you know Michelle Obama likes hockey? Maybe she could star on Heated Rivalry."

"Yes. We're tight."

"Goose and Moose making me Goose and Loose."

Week's Top Headlines

- *Andover Bands "Collide" to Create Knollchella; The Sounds Are Beautiful*
- *Pine Knoll Still Has Not Found Cluster Reps*
- *Cult Applications Out and Due Sunday!*
- *Newest Immunity Items Released: Freshmen Must End the Day in a Senior's Bed*
- *All Seniors Who Spent Friday Crawling on All Fours Devastated to Realize That Assassin Was Never a Thing, Just Something Organized by a Rogue Class Rep With a Camera*



The Phillipian SPORTS

good luck to the teams with
post-szn matches!!!

Volume CXLIX | Number 13

May 15, 2026

Boys Volleyball Concludes Undefeated Season with NEPSBVA Win

LUCY VINNAKOTA

SATURDAY 5/9

Andover 3

Exeter 1

Boys Volleyball (10-0) defeated Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) on Saturday to earn first place in the NEPSBVA, marking the conclusion of its season and the final game of the team's ten departing Seniors.

Going into Saturday, the team focused on specific techniques and drills in practices, which Kwadjo Adjepong '27 elaborated on.

"It was a lot of intense practice that led up to our championship match against Exeter. We were more intentional with our drills. We focused on improving the areas we lacked in and strengthening the parts where we could beat Exeter at," said Adjepong.

According to Justin Puno '26, the team found itself struggling to communicate effectively at the start of the match due to intense pressure and high expectations. However, Puno recounted, the team effectively used the opportunity to discuss in the middle of the game.

"We lost the first set and won the last three, and there was just some miscommunication. We got into a little bit of a rut in the middle of the set during one ro-

tation we couldn't get out of, and so we called time-out, and talked to the team about where we were going, and it became a bit more level headed," said Puno. "[We] liked the momentum of what we changed, [and] it carried into the rest of the game."

Adjepong described a specific play that empowered the team's mindset.

"There was one play where Kai Szanton ['26] was being set the ball, and it looked like he was gonna hit across the court, but he waited for the ball for just a split second, and rotated his body in a way that he was able to hit the ball straight down the line, right past the Exeter blockers, and it was the most beautiful hit I had ever seen all season," said Adjepong.

According to Ren Oh '28, although the team did not enter the NEPSBVA tournament with a specific game plan, players had various goals that they wanted to achieve.

"One of the things that we kept in mind was that we need to be smarter on our tips, like diversified offense more and kind of straying away from a tactical aspect. We knew that Exeter was really gonna go all out in this game, as it's a championship and we have beaten them throughout the season, twice. We knew that we were gonna be in for a match, so we had to make sure we were mentally in the right headspace," said Oh.

Having ten Seniors on the team, Boys Volleyball will have an almost completely new roster next season. Puno expressed optimism for the team's future



ALLEGRA LEE/THE PHILLIPIAN

Michael Huang '26 spikes the ball as two Exeter athletes leap up to defend.

success.

"There are 15 kids that I've seen this year, and ten of them are Seniors, so it will definitely be a big challenge for all the underclassmen to assume the roles of not only leadership, but stepping up in their play for next season. And making sure to foster a strong sense of community and teamwork with so many people leaving, but I'm confident that whoever we choose for captains for next year will do a good job in not only encouraging others to play, but also motivating them and helping them improve and drowning our team for possible future success," said Puno.



COURTESY OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY

Malcolm Tolbert '26 celebrates a successful spike with his teammates.

Girls Lacrosse Finishes Regular Season Undefeated, Emma Morrison '28 Reaches 100 Career Goals

ALEX GODSEY & BEN KAZLOUSKI

SATURDAY 5/9

Andover 18

Loomis 3

Girls Lacrosse (15-0) capped off a dominant regular season on Saturday, defeating Loomis Chaffee (Loomis) by 15 goals to close out its undefeated campaign. Andover kept Loomis scoreless through the first half and surrendered just three goals throughout the game, all while playing through a relentless downpour that had begun before the match's commencement. Notably, Emma Morrison '28 scored her hundredth career goal. Entering the Prep Cup this Saturday, the team hopes to recreate its championship

win last season.

On Saturday, despite a Senior night home-crowd-backing Loomis, Loomis was never able to find its footing. Andover dominated the draw circle, winning 80 to 90 percent of controls. Andover's defensive unit had 30 combined draw controls and forced turnovers over the course of the game. Charlotte Dorman PG'26 described the team's strategy of using the elements to their advantage, focusing on what it could control.

"It was pouring rain during warm-ups and throughout the entire game, so our main focus was to play through the unpredictable and harness our controllables. We didn't let the rain affect us, and we actually let it fuel us, we were excited to play in the downpour," said Dorman.

Dorman continued, "We made sure to match their energy. In a previous rainy game, we didn't do a good job of taking care of each possession, with a lot of missed shots,

dropped passes, and bobbling. So in practice, we focused on doing the little things right, taking care of the ball, and making the most of each possession."

The offensive production was spread across the roster, with newcomers and veterans contributing to the scoreboard. Aubrey Orraca-Cecil '29 and Meghan McKiernan '28 scored two goals each. Dorman, returning from injury, dominated the net in her first game back, a moment that energized the bench. Vanessa Hall '28 highlighted the balanced scoring throughout the team.

"Charlotte [Dorman] scored, which was really awesome because it was one of her first games back since her injury. She has been out for most of the season, and she was able to come in and score, which was great to see. Scarlet [Glass PG'26] had some goals, Megan had some, and it was an all around team effort. The bench was really energized for ev-

eryone who scored. The energy stayed high throughout the game," said Hall.

The most celebrated moment of the afternoon belonged to Morrison, who reached 100 career goals on Saturday. Morrison hit the milestone in just her second year on Varsity, emphasizing the team that made the milestone possible.

"I was going into it with a strong mindset that we had to work really hard for it and that it was not going to come easily. My teammates are so good about sharing the ball and wanting to win. The energy they bring into the game and the way they cheer for each other when people score makes it so much fun. Every day, no matter how the game is going or the weather, everyone supports each other so well. That is why we do so well," said Morrison.

With the regular season now behind it, Girls Lacrosse now turns its attention to the New England Prep Cup,

where it will enter as the defending champion and one of the top seeds in the field. This week, preparation is centered around sharpening the details. Specifically, Hall immediately pointed to communication and defense.

"My mind instantly goes to defense. I anticipate that we'll be facing some really strong offenses with really skilled players. So I think that if we just have really good communication and slides, they won't be able to get good quality shots or anything. And for our team as a whole, when we have good defensive stops, it just really generates our offense and builds the energy for the team. So our defense is essentially just fueling a good offense for us," said Hall.

Girls Lacrosse will play its first Prep Cup game away on Saturday.

Boys Ultimate Triumphs in Final Regular Season Match Against Belmont Hill Before NEPSUL Championships

SARAH WANG

WEDNESDAY 5/13

Andover 13

Belmont Hill 8

Boys Ultimate (12-5) played Belmont Hill this past Wednesday, dominating the game in a 13-8 win. With many players on the team being injured, the team had to adapt and learn to communi-

cate better with less people on the team. Andover's matchup against Belmont Hill marked its last game before the New England Preparatory School Ultimate League (NEPSUL) Championships this Saturday.

Paxton Auguste '28 shared what the team's goals were going into the game. Its main goal was to ensure that everyone, especially the new members, were comfortable playing with each other.

"It's just what we have to work on, especially with a lot of new kids, to make sure everyone's organized. At this

point, we've all had a lot of time to get used to each other, but [we focused on] making sure everyone feels comfortable with how we play, because again, there are a lot of new kids," said Auguste.

Auguste recognized key players in the game on Wednesday, including Zachary Yuan '27 and Nate Goldberg '27, who was still recovering from an injury.

"[Yuan] made a lot of good runs. He saw some really good space to run into, so that was good. It's nice seeing his spatial awareness improving. Nate [also] had some

good clips today that we got on camera. They're [both in] a good place," said Auguste.

Cristian Ramirez '29 shared takeaways competing against Belmont Hill that the team will take into account as it competes in the NEPSUL Championships this Saturday.

"We don't really care about the outcome of the game as long as we put our best foot forward. We prepare, we do everything we can, and we make good decisions. Just having that mindset is what best prepares us for the game. What stood out most was the

hard work and determination we had in the game," said Ramirez.

Ramirez continued, "Heading into the championship, we just want to have confidence in ourselves and keep playing for each other, because that dynamic of everyone working and helping each other is what's going to drive us and motivate us to do the best we can."

The team will travel to Northfield Mount Hermon (NMH) for the NEPSUL Championships on Saturday.

Cycling's David Porto '26 Leads with Energy and Community

JOHN LEW

Co-Captain David Porto '26 leads Cycling with an infectious energy and a communicator's instinct that has shaped the team's close-knit culture. Porto first got on a bike competitively in his Junior year after being recruited by former Co-Captain Daniel Zou '23, who figured Porto's background in cycling made him a natural fit. What started as a low-stakes experiment turned into a four-year commitment anchored not by competition, but by community.

Porto credited former Co-Captains Yasmine Tazi '24 and Anna Ohm '24 as the role models who shaped his leadership philosophy.

"They've always been really friendly and not intimidating to me, and also great athletes," said Porto.



COURTESY OF DAVID PORTO

That balance of warmth and athleticism is something Porto has carried into his own captaincy. One of his primary goals is to keep the team's spirit high,

focusing more on energy than speed.

"I'm definitely not as great of a rider as I am a communicator or someone who tries to

keep the energy up. My main role is making sure people are well and happy, and that the energy is good even when we have indoor practices," said Porto.

His teammates have taken notice of Porto's communicative and connected leadership. Jasjit Hargun '27 described a moment during a routine practice when several riders were involved in a crash. Porto's response was immediate.

"He quickly stepped up to the task, organized everything, made sure everyone was calm, made sure they were okay, and worked with the coaches to get help on the way. A lot of us were surprised at what happened, but he immediately got into action," said Hargun.

Hargun identified consistency as the defining trait of Porto's leadership. He is on time, open, and reliably available to anyone who needs support.

"He's always consistently open and there for the team. If anyone needs help, he's always there for us," said Hargun.

For Porto, the soul of the team lies in its size. Cycling is a squad of only ten athletes, and he sees that as an advantage. It is one that makes genuine connection not just possible, but inevitable.

"Since we're a smaller team, everybody gets to know each other really well. People get to have different opportunities to welcome each other, teach each other about the sport of cycling, and bond over it," said Porto.

As a cyclist, Porto described himself as well-rounded with a particular edge on climbs. He will take that competitive spirit with him next year, as he plans to continue club cycling at the University of Michigan.

Leading with Kindness and Friendship: Matt Robinson '27

EVA JACKSON

Co-Captain Matt Robinson '27 learned to ride a bike when he was three, and he has been biking since. Robinson started racing competitively in sixth grade and has now spent all three of his years at Andover on Cycling.

He shared that his favorite part about being a Co-Captain is spending more time with the team and engaging more with his teammates.

"I love being on the team, regardless. I don't have to be a Captain, but being a Captain, I get to be involved in more things and spend even more time with the team in more meaningful ways. I think just getting to be more involved in all that is my favorite part," said Robinson.

With a roster of ten athletes, the team is able to spend a lot of time together. Robinson described the unity of the team and

how he has worked to build connection within the team.

"I think, by virtue of being a small team, we're already quite unified, but specifically to create camaraderie, Cycling has a tradition of staying over after every practice to stretch and do core together. Trying to do these exercises that are, either some sort of competition or games, bring people together," said Robinson.

Given his extensive competitive cycling experience, Robinson leads the team with experience. He described how he approaches leading as both a vocal and demonstrative leader.

"Especially with cycling where there's a lot of technical skill and tactical knowledge that you need, I try to take an approach like leading the team in exercises and demonstrations of skill and tactics and presentations or videos. But more, [I try] to show the team what I mean, and so, I practice with them rather than just telling them and expecting them to do it



COURTESY OF MATT ROBINSON

on their own," said Robinson.

Not only does Robinson lead the team in competitions, but also on how to optimize its performance off of the course. Arden

Quan '29 commented on Robinson's advice on nutrition support of newer racers.

"He is very bright because he is always optimistic. He teaches a lot about what to eat before races. So he uses his experience to help newer people on the team like me," said Quan.

Rachel Levitzky '28 described Robinson's relationship with his teammates, which lay in his strong leadership and being grounded as an athlete.

"He takes charge, but not in a bossy way. He's very integrated with the team friendship-wise. So, he's a leader, but he's also a friend," said Levitzky.

Given that the team welcomes riders of all experience and skill levels, Robinson shared his hope to continue to grow the team and invite new faces in the future.

"I hope we can get even more beginners [onto] the team and really add to their experiences as riders and develop them into strong and safe racers. So I just really hope we can continue to be a welcoming sport for beginners," said Robinson.

CYCLING

DAVID PORTO '26 **C**
VINHEDO, SP, BR

MATT ROBINSON '27 **C**
ANDOVER, MA

SONYA CARO DEL CASTILLO '26
ANDOVER, MA

ELLIOT CHAI '28
ATHERTON, CA

JASJIT HARGUN '27
ANDOVER, MA

FRANK HU '26
DARIEN, CT

RACHEL LEVITZKY '28
WELLESLEY, MA

EDDY MARRERO '28
DOUGLAS, AZ

HENRY WALL '27
ANDOVER, MA

ARDEN QUAN '29
NEEDHAM HEIGHTS, MA

Podium Sweeps and Strong Finishes Mark Cycling's Final Race

WYATT ORRACA-CECIL

Cycling traveled to the New Hampshire Motor Speedway for its final competition of the season. Despite challenging weather conditions, the team delivered standout performances across the board, securing podium finishes in all three events, with the performances providing momentum to carry into next year. Andover finished in the NERCL standings in third place behind Exeter High School and Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter).

Because the forecast was rainy and windy, the team had to prepare for the challenging conditions they would face. Uncertainty about how the course would unfold added to the antic-

ipation of race day. Co-Captain Matt Robinson '27 described how the team adapted to the weather.

"When you're moving quickly on a bike, especially when it's drizzling, it gets quite cold from the wind. Everyone was thinking about how they wanted to warm up and what they wanted to wear. Those decisions involved a lot of trial and error, and some people probably didn't warm up as much as they might have wanted to," said Robinson.

Despite the challenging conditions, the team filled the leaderboard with strong performances across the roster. Eddy Marrero '28 reflected on the team's success across various divisions.

"In the actual individual race

itself, we had a first-place finish for Boys C, a sixth-place finish for Boys A, and a fifth-place finish for Boys B, so we had solid placements across the board. Then, once everything was announced, we ended up finishing first overall in Boys C, and third overall for both Boys A and Boys B," said Marrero.

In the Boys C race, cyclists were neck and neck heading into the final lap. Robinson recounted the close finish approaching the line, praising Arden Quan '29 for staying composed under pressure to emerge victorious in both the individual race and the Boys C NERCL Category Standings.

"It was a pretty quiet race for the first seven laps, and then on the last hill, it exploded into a

massive sprint. Arden had a really strong finish and a very quick sprint. He won his race and, with that, the overall title for his category," said Robinson.

This race also marked the final high school cycling competition for the team's Seniors. Marrero, a Lower, reflected on the impact they had on the program and their performances in their last race.

"I would like to shout out the two Seniors, David Porto '26 and Frank Hu '26, on our team. Since I joined my freshman year, they've been putting in really good efforts. They were one of the reasons we were so supportive of each other and able to overcome challenges as a team and keep going. This was their last race ever, and they both put

in a really good effort and had a great race," said Marrero.

The season reflected the team's continued success and consistency throughout the year. Robinson emphasized how the team's bond strengthened over the course of the season, something that was especially evident at the final race.

"I think we've had a good season, but especially today, after the race, we were all hanging out together and able to spend more time than we usually get to. The cheering was really strong on all sides, and I think it's a reflection of how we've grown together as a team. I think this was a really strong way to finish a good season, and I'm sad to see the Seniors go," said Robinson.

Pitching and Defense Power Baseball Past Deerfield and Cushing

TIGER WANG

SATURDAY 5/9	
Andover	3
Deerfield	1
SATURDAY 5/9	
Andover	8
Deerfield	0
WEDNESDAY 5/13	
Andover	2
Cushing	1

Baseball (13-9) entered the final stretch of its season with two objectives in mind: improve its seeding and preserve its pitchers for a strong playoff run. The team faced off in a doubleheader against Deer-

field on Saturday, securing the win despite a shaky first inning. Following its gritty first-round victory over Cushing on Wednesday, the team has climbed from the fifth seed to the third.

Owen Prior '29 described the doubleheader against Deerfield on Saturday, emphasizing the key role that the pitchers played in these two victories.

"The first game was really close. We both scored one run early on, and then it was just a pitching duel the rest of the way. We scored late in the game, and then our pitcher, Grant McCubrey [26], threw a complete game, allowing only one run. That was really big for us. In game two, we won eight to nothing. We jumped on them really early and just kept scoring. We stayed on them and did not take our foot off the gas," said Prior.

Prior described the team's defensive discipline and composed pitching as the decisive

factor in the sweep.

"Deerfield is a pretty good team. They have some good bats, but our pitcher just kept bearing down. He gave our defense chances to make plays while also getting strikeouts. There were not very many hard-hit balls, and when there were, they found gloves. That was the big story of the day. Holding them to one run was huge," said Prior.

In terms of standout players, Thomas Perri '29 pointed out McCubrey, Co-Captain Michael Gilligan '26, and Jacob Honor '27 for their consistently strong pitching, which limited Deerfield to runs.

"Grant pitched the first game, in which we won two to one. It was very close, and we had a long week leading up to it. It was really important for Grant to give us some length and pitch well. Even after a shaky first inning in which he gave up a run, throwing six straight innings without allowing a hit was incredible to

watch. Michael continued that success in the second game. Knowing we were short on arms, he threw six innings and only gave up one hit. We only had to use one more pitcher, Jacob Honor, for an inning. That really saved our arms as we now head into the playoffs," said Perri.

Against Cushing, the team's defense held the opposing team in check. However, Matthew Shampine PG'26 noted that the offense struggled at the plate as the team looked for gaps in the defense.

"We played very well defensively. Our offense put up seven hits, and we hit balls hard, but they were just not hit to the right spots. We ended up only scoring two runs. If we continue that consistency with hitting the ball hard, it will translate into runs against Dexter [Southfield (Dexter)] on Saturday," said Shampine.

As the team looks to close out its season strong, Perri notes the team's mentality and

ambition as they head into Saturday's game against Dexter.

"The Deerfield game was very important for us because it allowed us to jump from the five seed to the three seed. This led us to have a home playoff game and an opponent in Cushing for the first round. Instead of being away for possibly all three games, we were able to play at home today. That got the guys fired up. Our performance today sent Cushing home early, and that prepared us for Dexter. We have lost to Dexter twice by only one run. That feeling of losing by one run and knowing we can do better is going to get us fired up for the next round," said Perri.

Baseball will face Dexter on Saturday and Middlesex on Tuesday.

Golf Competes at III and Pippy O'Connor Tournaments

JULIEN REQUA

Golf (14-2-2) competed in two tournaments this weekend, with athletes participating in the Independent Invitational (III) Tournament at Fox Hopyard. Andover ultimately placed sixth. On Monday, Andover's female athletes traveled to the 40th Pippy O'Connor Independent Girls Golf Classic at Shuttle Meadow, at which it collectively placed second.

Both tournaments followed multi-round formats with competitive fields and challeng-

ing environmental conditions. Scores were added over the weekend, with the top scores in each round contributing to the final team standings.

Zihan Zhao '28 highlighted a teammate's standout performance while reflecting on the tournament's conditions and overall experience.

"I would give a big shoutout to Ian Kim '28. He shot a huge 72 on Sunday. It was going to be an interesting weekend, with rain and lightning delaying the first day. I was a bit nervous since it was my first major tournament with the team, going out and driving a couple of hours to play 36 holes of golf,"

said Zhao.

At the Pippy O'Connor Tournament, Andover navigated a challenging course against a large field of NEPSAC schools. Helena Lai '29 reflected on her first appearance at the event, highlighting the course's conditions and praising her teammates and the tournament's overall atmosphere.

"It was my first [time at the tournament], so it was a really good experience overall. The course was really nice. We played at Shuttle Meadow in Connecticut, and it was a tricky course, but it was really fun. I want to shout out Zorah Williams [PG]'26 for being a

really good leader, and she's always in a positive mood. I recognized a lot of people because I used to play golf with a lot of them, so it was fun seeing them again," said Lai.

Ten players competed at the III Golf Tournament at Fox Hopyard, facing a competitive field across a challenging course over the weekend. Rocco Fawcett '28 reflected on the overall experience, describing the team environment while praising the support from the coaching staff.

"It was really fun because we stayed in a hotel and went to dinner, and had seafood at a restaurant. The team energy

was great, and we were just trying to keep the spirits high because we were all practicing and ready to go. I want to shout out the coaches, [Head] Coach [Brian] Faulk, [Assistant Coach Chris] Odden, and [Assistant Coach Tedd] Parker for helping the team prepare for the tournament and for the competition to run smoothly," said Fawcett.

Golf will face Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) this weekend.

Softball Caps Regular Season Undefeated, Eyes to Defend Big East Title

ALEX GODSEY

Softball (17-0) closed out a historic regular season with three decisive wins, 9-0 facing Mount Saint Charles Academy, 10-2 versus Lawrence Academy (Lawrence), and 8-0 against Cushing. This undefeated run was powered by dominant pitching and a strong offense. With the postseason ahead, Andover looks to carry its momentum to defend its Big East title.

On Friday, Softball made quick work of Mount Saint Charles Academy with a decisive defensive performance from Co-Captain Ashley Schuman '27, striking out 14 batters over 7 innings en route to a no hitter. Compliment-

ing this feat, Co-Captain Rihana Gomez '26 and Victoria MacKenzie '28 both contributed three runs batted in, a pair of hits, and a homerun apiece to the handling of Mt. St. Charles. Sierra Lee '28 highlighted Schuman's performance as the anchor of the game.

"Our Captain Ashley Schuman pitched the whole game. She threw a no-hit shutout, and not a lot of people can throw no hitters, so that was really impressive. No one on the team was able to get a hit on her at all. It was a really quick game, she was really dominant on the mound," said Lee.

Playing Lawrence on Saturday, Softball started the game slow, but that start was quickly flipped as Andover found its rhythm on offense. Gaby Potter '27 went a perfect 4-for-4, while home runs

from Audrey Gotha '28 and Victoria MacKenzie '28 swung the momentum towards Andover. Head Coach Karen Douyon noted that Lawrence had initially made the cautious decision to walk MacKenzie, a move that was emphasized with Mackenzie's successful at-bat later down the stretch.

"Lawrence opened the game and intentionally walked Victoria MacKenzie, but then later in the game, Victoria hit a huge home run. We have a saying in the dug out, 'big dawgs gotta eat,' like you better be afraid of Victoria. That moment was super exciting," said Douyon.

On Wednesday, complementing another perfect defensive performance, Gomez hit two homeruns, further cementing herself into Softball history with the most

home runs in a season. Lee commented on Gomez's dominance, with her game-changing plays becoming common occurrences.

"In the first inning, Audrey Gotha was on base, and Rihana goes up and just crushes a changeup way over the fence. She's really playing her own game at this point, just destroying the school record and setting new records. Whenever she goes up to bat, we always know something fun is going to happen. Then later that game, she hit another homerun. It was crazy. She's a beast. We just expect it at this point," said Lee.

With the regular season complete, Softball will look towards the Big East Tournament, as it hopes to defend its crown. Coming into the final stretch, Andover hopes to conclude its remarkable

undefeated season with this final tournament victory. MacKenzie stressed the need to continue playing its game in a dominant way.

"With us being the [first] seed, we're expecting to come in hot. We're going to face some good competition, so [we have got to] get our bats out early, be strong in the field, and can't be too cocky. We just [have got to] come out strong, play our game, play how we do, and we should be fine," said MacKenzie.

Softball will play its first game of the Big East Tournament against Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) on Saturday.

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Girls/Non-Binary Ultimate Builds Momentum Through Wins and Losses

JOHN LEW

Through a mix of wins and losses, Girls/Non-Binary Ultimate has continued to build momentum through its recent stretch of games. Following a strong showing at the NEPSUL Championships, the team carried its growth into several recent matchups, including games against Somerville and Newton North.

After the team's recent win over Newton North, Helen Xiong '29 noted that the team's improvement became especially vis-

ible after an earlier tournament, where Andover earned its first win of the season.

"Something that stood out to me in general was that our cutters have improved a lot. I think we had a tournament the Sunday before that game, and after that tournament, everyone improved a lot. We also had our first win during that tournament, which was really nice. So I think the improvement that all the players got after the tournament was shown during the game," said Xiong.

Tiffanie An '29 emphasized the team's balanced effort against Newton North, noting that contributions came from across the

team.

"As a team, we worked really well together. There were a lot of people who had really strong moments, so there's not really anyone in particular who stood out. Everyone really played their best, and it was also really nice to have a win," said An.

Despite recent improvements, the team also faced a tough setback against Somerville, falling 6-9; in another recent matchup, Andover fell to Cambridge RL 3-12. Despite the loss, Jane Hlavaty '28 emphasized the team's strong spirit and continued development throughout the game.

"One cool thing was that our

coach let me throw a hammer, which is a pretty risky throw, but it turned out pretty well, and we almost scored. A lot of other people really stepped up today, like Jeannie Kang [28], [Co-Captains] Iris [Liu '26] and Niki [Tavakoli '27]. Niki got a Spirit Award, so I'm really proud of her, and everyone did really well today," said Hlavaty.

Throughout the season, team culture has remained an important part of the team's identity. Xiong described the team's use of cheers, chants, and themed "psyches" before games.

"We're pretty consistent with our psyches. Before every single

game, we've had a psyche, and the theme is usually really creative, or at least interesting. I really enjoyed the rainbow psyche because we all coordinated together," said Xiong.

Hlavaty also shared one of the team's long-standing traditions.

"Coming back from a tournament or just a game, we always play the song Halo by Beyoncé. That's a big tradition in the whole ultimate community," said Hlavaty.

Girls/Non-Binary Ultimate will compete at the NEPSUL Tournament this Saturday.

Boys Lacrosse Falls to Williston in Overtime, Bested by Dexter

EVA JACKSON

SATURDAY 5/9	
Andover	10
Williston	11
WEDNESDAY 5/13	
Andover	9
Dexter	12

Boys Lacrosse (6-8) gave up a 10-3 lead in the fourth quarter, losing to Williston Northampton (Williston) in overtime by one goal. The team also lost to Dexter Southfield (Dexter) 9-12, playing without many due to injury.

Going into the fourth quarter with a seven goal lead, Ben Ka-

zowski '28 described the momentum shift of the game and how rushing on offense led to opportunities for the other team.

"We needed to just possess the ball, be smart with it. And we can't throw it away offensively or shoot it really early into the offensive possession and give them time to come back. They put up some extra good shots and we had a two minute unreleasable penalty against us, and they scored two or three off of that," said Kazlouski.

On a seven game losing streak, the team has worked to stay positive after each loss. Kazlouski commented on the team's positivity and recent practices. He also reflected on the offensive and defensive might the team brought in the practices leading up to facing Williston.

"We've been having a really rough streak. The past six games have been probably six of the best teams we'll play all season. We're trying not to get so negative and

dwel on it because they are super talented teams. After losing our sixth game against St. Paul's, we had our best two practices of the year on that Thursday and Friday before Williston. Offense was clicking really well. Defensively, we were having some really good energy too, that same little pizzazz we needed before our little bit of our losing streak," said Kazlouski.

Kazlouski described what the team has learned from their past games through film study, which entails being more conscious with shots and penalties.

"We learned that we need to keep taking better care of the ball, which has been the lesson since our very first game. We have too many possessions where we have to get back on defense just because we're throwing it away or shooting bad shots. We just need to be smarter," said Kazlouski.

Kazlouski continued, "We can't be getting any stupid pen-

alties, especially late in the game, and when we are up, we're in the position where all we need to do is possess the ball. We don't necessarily even need to score anymore, we just need to be more intelligent and not lose our cool."

Though the team ended up losing to Williston, Kazlouski pointed out the bright spots of the game and its success.

"There was a lot that we've been working on that we demonstrated we can actually do. Our offense was playing beautifully in the beginning. We were getting some awesome shots and now all it is is just being able to finish the opportunities we're given," said Kazlouski.

According to Jeffrey Lim '27 the team was close with Dexter until the fourth quarter, where Dexter pulled away. Lim reflected on the past two games and areas for improvement.

"We need to obviously learn from the fourth quarter mistakes

that we have," said Lim. "So definitely keeping up in the fourth quarter and stopping as much as we can or having another guy in for you so that we don't get as tired [would be beneficial]."

While the team was upset about its losses, Lim shared that the team's focus is on improving for its matchup against Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) on Saturday, May 23.

"It sucks to lose, and winning would be great, but our eyes, our minds are on Exeter right now.

And these other games that we're going to play, they're just stepping stones, and it'd be great if we can use these to gain momentum, use these last few games to sharpen, offense, or defense. So then when Exeter comes, we can beat them," said Lim.

The team will face Berkshire on Saturday.

Senior Night: Girls Water Polo Plays Final Regular Season Games

NICHOLAS JUNG

SATURDAY 5/9	
Andover	9
Deerfield	4
WEDNESDAY 5/13	
Andover	12
Exeter	17

Girls Water Polo (7-3) hosted two games at home over the past week, besting Deerfield by five points but falling to Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) 12-17.

On Saturday, Girls Water Polo faced Deerfield for the second time this season, having previously defeated the team 14-8. Djenabou Bah '28 reflected on how the team used its familiarity with Deerfield to its advantage.

"We already knew our opponents and who was their biggest threat. So, we had different people go based on our levels. And it was a really straightforward game. We were up every quarter,



CINDY ZHOU/THE PHILLIPIAN

Contested by an Exeter athlete, Co-Captain Addison Deng '26 attempts a pass.

so it was good," said Bah.

Helen McNeely '29 described how the team's momentum during Senior Night carried the players throughout the game.

"We had pretty good energy because it was Senior Night, and we had played them before and done well. We started off pretty good, and then we kind of just carried that with us for the

game," said McNeely.

On Wednesday, the team faced Exeter, which it had previously defeated at the beginning of the season. Despite a strong offense, Andover struggled defensively due to injuries and the use of an emergency goalie. Camden Schopler '27 explained the team's challenges and areas of improvement.

"It didn't go the best, honestly. But part of that may have been that we had our backup backup goalie, who isn't a goalie. She had some great effort considering that she doesn't play, so that was an issue for today. And then we kept getting counterattacked. And that's something we're going to need to work on before the tournament this Saturday, but there's also a bunch of good things towards the second half, where we had drives going, and we were running an offense against them. We may not necessarily have done the best, but we definitely started improving towards the end of the game, which we can use for the tournament this Saturday," said Schopler.

As the team looks ahead to the NEPSAC Championships, it has focused on experimenting with different techniques and drills in practice, which Bah elaborated on.

"We've just been trying to up our practices and try different defenses. One thing that our team hadn't really been good at was six on five, when a person gets directed for 20 seconds. And we have been working on that a lot this past week. So that helps because we had a bunch of six on

five plays [on Saturday]. And we could see how we improved because everyone got to their spots way faster," said Bah.

Schopler described the team's growth throughout the season and emphasized the importance of starting strong in its final tournament.

"We've been pretty good at improvement regarding certain aspects throughout the season. We may have started off having a very stagnant offense, and throughout the season, we started having more movement on offense and more people having confidence within themselves to shoot the ball to bring it in. And there's just been so many improvements in people who have never played before. All we have to do is to come out strong in the first half, instead of coming out strong in the second half. And then improving counterattacks, and everybody being ready to get back on defense when we miss a shot, or get the ball stolen on offense," said Schopler.

Girls Water Polo will host the annual NEPSAC Tournament this Saturday.

Boys Crew Shows Strength Across Weekend Racing Ahead of NEIRAs

AVIAD AWA

Boys Crew had a strong weekend program-wide, competing in a tri-team race against Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) and Tabor Academy (Tabor) on Saturday, and later in the Lower Boat Regatta on Wednesday. In Saturday's matchup, Andover boats earned consistent finishes across the board, with B4 securing a victory in its race. The following week at the Lower Boat Regatta, B4 again finished first, B5 taking second, and B6 placing third. Although the team was not as dominant as it had hoped on Saturday, the races offered valuable insight for the coaches as they worked to finalize boat lineups for the New

England Interscholastic Rowing Association Championships (NEIRAs), a goal the team has been building toward all season.

B1 Coxswain Vivien Valckx '28 described the toughness of the competition and the team's mentality heading into Saturday's races, while also praising her boat's performance against a strong Exeter crew. She noted that the race helped clarify where the team stands among top programs as NEIRAs approach.

"We knew that Exeter was a very strong program. They're always really fast, especially this year, and we knew they were a team to look out for. We went in with the mentality that we were going to go out hard and put together the best piece possible. I think my boat, [B1], did really well

given the conditions we were in. Racing Exeter was a really good checkpoint for us toward the end of the season and looking ahead to NEIRAs," said Valckx.

Sebastián Vermut '27 reflected on the team's preparation leading into the race and how closely contested the matchup was.

"The week before, we did a lot of seat racing. We were really trying to find the fastest possible lineup, which meant lots of hard work on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Tabor is a great program, and we were able to do really well against them, and we also stuck with Exeter for a while during the race. They're obviously a really fast crew, and they made the difference in the team trophy. That showed us we have to continue to make some

changes going into NEIRAs next week," said Vermut.

Vermut elaborated on how the team plans to respond in training following the results, emphasizing that the performance serves as added motivation heading into NEIRAs and reinforces the focus and intensity needed in the final stretch of the season.

"In the Varsity boats, we got swept by Exeter, and that's a learning experience. When something like that happens, you look at it and ask, 'How can we approach next week differently? How can we make sure that when we get to NEIRAs, which is really the only race that matters now, we're ready to perform at our best?'" said Vermut.

With NEIRAs set to take place next week, Valckx reflected on

the team's season, noting that after some ups and downs earlier in the year, Boys Crew will enter the championships looking to finish the season strong.

"Right now, we're seeded fifth behind Exeter, Deerfield, Kent, and Salisbury, and that's something we have to keep in the back of our minds without letting it dictate how we approach the weekend. Everyone in the boat and across the program has put in so much work all year for this moment. When the race starts, everyone is going to give everything they have. Win or lose, all of these races and checkpoints are going to motivate us to do our best and hopefully finish higher than our seed," said Valckx.

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Girls Crew Defeats Exeter and Tabor, Participates in Lower Boat Regatta

WESLEY PHAM

Girls Crew spent the week-end racing Tabor Academy (Tabor) and Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter), following with an appearance at the Lower Boat Regatta on Wednesday. Through several tightly-contested races this week, Girls Crew secured the overall victory against its rivals, and took home the David Smith Trophy for combined boys and girls points on Saturday.

On Saturday against Tabor and Exeter, coxswain Yumi Lai '27 led boat one as they raced against Exeter. Lai reflected

on the thoughtful preparation and steadfast determination of her rowers as they pushed their limits.

"We knew that Exeter was going to set up their sprint really early, so we prepared for that in advance and trained for the sprint during the week leading up to this race. During the race, we did sprint early. We sprinted with 500 meters left, while normally we'd do that with around 250 left. It definitely took a lot of energy, but I was really proud of my rowers. You could tell every stroke that they put their everything and that extra 10 percent into every stroke, and you could tell that they wanted it

really bad," said Lai.

Lai continued, "For the sprint, we actually held onto them. We held onto two seats over them the whole way down, and we even gained another seat, but about 15 strokes till the line, we caught a crab, which slowed down the boat. But our boat was really resilient, and we picked it right up from that moment."

Elizabeth Qin '29 further elaborated on the close races against Exeter and Tabor.

"Racing against Exeter and Tabor was our closest race this season. Each race was won or lost by only seconds apart. During my race, I could see the Exeter boat to the very left of

us, and they were about one to two seats ahead of us. My boat worked so hard and pushed as hard as we could in order for us to take back the lead. We ended up winning by a bit over 1 second," said Qin.

Sarah Sun '29 reflected on how facing Andover's longtime rival heightened the energy and intensity of the races.

"Because it's Exeter, there was a lot of cheering when the boats came past. Also, the coxswains were talking a lot more, because when it's Exeter, you always want to win. When we were at the last 100 meters, Taylor [Shu '28], our coxswain, was screaming her head off, and it was a very lively atmo-

sphere," said Sun.

Lai expressed pride in the team's strong performance and looked forward to the upcoming NEIRAs.

"We think that all of our training that led up to this moment really worked out, and we look forward to seeing them again at NEIRAs next week, which is our New England interscholastic race, and racing them harder," said Lai.

Girls Crew will compete in a second Lower Boat Regatta this Saturday.

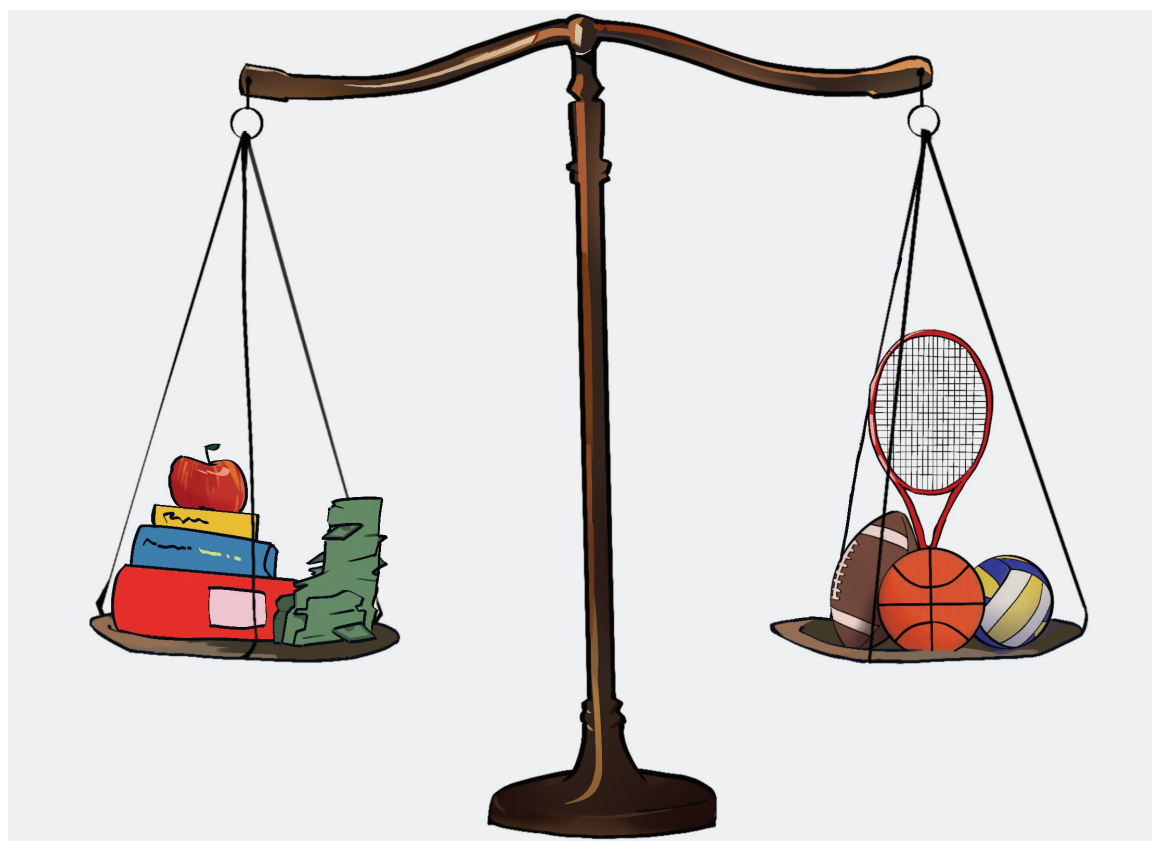
Why Andover's Athletic Investment Matters

BENJAMIN KAZLOUSKI

As the school year begins to wind down and the lawn fills with students playing Spikeball, excitement for the next year begins to build, including conversations about the future of athletics at Andover.

Andover has already committed significant resources to athletics, from the construction of facilities such as the Pan Athletic Center and Phelps Stadium to the admission of student-athletes with impressive résumés. While some teams have rewarded that investment with playoff runs, others reflect on seasons with records that emerged weaker than expected. As other selective boarding schools rise in athletic rankings and build state-of-the-art facilities, Andover's athletic spending has drawn scrutiny from those who believe that the resources could be dedicated elsewhere. However, I believe that Andover's commitment to sports is seen in many ways that go unnoticed.

With the completion of our very own 70,000 square foot Pan in 2022, and 98,000-square-foot multiuse Snyder Center in 2018, Andover has come a long way from the Borden Memorial Gym. With a new indoor track, Olympic-sized swimming pool, dance studio, and other updated spaces, Andover has shown a clear willingness to invest in athletics, competing amongst the strongest NEPSAC contenders such as Phillips Exeter Academy and Deerfield. Because of this, it



MARY LI / THE PHILLIPIAN

is easy to argue that we are spending too much on sports. According to the 2026 State of the Academy, more than 65 percent of respondents reported that they think Andover glorifies athletics over other extracurriculars, such as the arts, music, or robotics. However, it is important to remember that these facilities are not just for athletes hoping to play in college, but for the benefit of the entire student body.

Coming from public school, I believe requiring each student to participate in an activity, whether life-sport or interscholastic, has many benefits for the student body's health. Our athletic program recognizes the value of being active each day, working with

teammates, and building trust. Some of the strongest friendships I have made at Andover are those with my teammates. Whether it's the crew team pulling for each other even when their arms feel like they are about to fall off or the basketball team trusting each other with game-winning shots, sports teach you to rely on a teammate and create forms of healthy communication. Not to mention, daily physical activity is known to provide cognitive benefits, decreasing depression and clearing brain fog.

Financially, continued investment in athletics might also yield more funding for the school in general. According to the 2025 Annual Report of Phillips Academy, 52 percent of

the academy's revenue comes from philanthropic donations and pays for 45 percent of the academy's annual expenses. Strong athletic programs help build school spirit, strengthen alumni engagement, and attract prospective students and donors. While I am sure the school's finances are more complex than I could imagine, it seems fair to ask whether further improvements to athletic facilities could benefit the school in the long run, both by strengthening philanthropy and by supporting student health.

While I deeply appreciate Andover's athletic facilities as they are, especially given they are among the strongest in the nation, I still believe there is

space for improvement. With only 1 turf field, many of Andover's 17 interscholastic sports compete for time on the turf, leaving most teams to practice on the grass fields in Siberia. In the fall, for example, Varsity Football and Varsity Field Hockey often split the time for practice. As a football player, I felt that limitation directly. The limited turf time restricted the drills we were able to practice. Moreover, early in the season, our practices were in the Siberia Fields, where the uneven grass contributed to many twisted ankles and cut knees. While it is unrealistic to expect every team to play and practice on turf, I think improving the condition of grass fields could be something Andover could work towards to improve the safety and quality of its athletics.

It can be easy to focus on the negatives in Andover's athletics, but doing so ignores how much the school already does well. While I complain about the turf space, I also recognize the support all athletes get, with athletic trainers, accessible transportation for games, and food, all being widely available. It is unfair to expect every single one of our sports to be ranked first in the country, but often we judge our athletic program with that as the standard. Andover's athletics play a big part in the Andover experience, and athletic investment benefits more than just students hoping to play sports at the collegiate level. It supports the health, school spirit, and friendships of every Andover student.

Pressure of College Athletic Commitment on Young Athletes

SARAH WANG

In February, various Andover athletes celebrated finalizing their commitments to compete in college athletics: this group includes Julian Rios '26, committed to Stanford University for wrestling, and Zorah Williams '26, committed to Trinity College for golf. Although they both ended up committing to college for athletics, the process is highly overlooked and is often more challenging than it seems. These processes usually begin in the summer of an athlete's Lower year, which is too early. This initial date for teenagers to begin contacting schools blurs a line between teens playing a sport they enjoy and teens competing for a college spot.

Rios began wrestling at six years old, training with the Doughboy Wrestling Club in Massachusetts. By the time he was ten years old, he decided he wanted to compete collegiately. Rios described his childhood that fueled his passion for wrestling.

"I started wanting to wrestle in college when I realized I was really good at it and that it was something that I wanted to keep pursuing all the way through high school and col-

lege, which was when I was around 10. I would watch it on TV, like on ESPN, and it was just something I wanted to do ever since I was really young," said Rios.

In wrestling, recruitment is mostly performance-based: college programs send recruiters to major tournaments where athletes are directly evaluated. Rios described his recruiting process, as well as how Andover and other people have helped him throughout the process.

"The recruitment process for wrestling started after my sophomore year in the summer in June, which is when colleges were allowed to start talking to you. I remember, on that day, I ended up getting a few phone calls from colleges. Andover provides the spotlight, and they give me the ability to perform and show my talents, and if it wasn't for [Andover], I wouldn't have done so well. Academically too, [Andover has] helped me so much to show that I'm capable of wrestling and doing academics at a high level," said Rios.

What surprised me about Rios's story is how much of the recruitment process happens before Senior year and behind the scenes — from the phone calls in the summer to years of tournaments watched by college coaches and scouts.



ELLE PARK / THE PHILLIPIAN

This process is a grind that begins far earlier than it really should, blurring a line between high schoolers playing a sport for fun and being pressured to compete for spots on college teams. This places stress for teenagers to have their future planned out long before Senior year, an excessive ask for high schoolers.

Similarly, by the age of 15, Williams was already considering whether golf might have a place in her college plans. However, an injury during high school before attending Andover derailed her original plans

to play in college. Williams reflected on her journey at Andover where she received support to change that, allowing her to connect with college coaches and re-enter the recruiting process.

"Coming to Andover gave me an opportunity to reach out to coaches again. Without Andover, there's no shot. I would be at a totally different school, and I wouldn't be playing. [Head] Coach [Brian] Faulk ['00] has been great, and he's helped me email some of the coaches I've talked to," said Williams.

The college commitment process can thrive even starting in Senior year, possibly even working better with more maturity. It took an injury, school transfer, and uncertainty about playing college golf for Williams to end up at Trinity College, where she now describes as one of the only schools she believes would be a good fit.

These two stories are just examples within a much larger class of Andover athletes navigating the same process. This year, over forty Seniors across a variety of sports committed to compete at the collegiate level, each process with their own timeline and obstacles. It is worth recognizing that behind every commitment announcement is a process that is often longer, harder, and more uncertain than it looks from the outside. The recruiting system puts an unreasonable amount of pressure on young athletes, demanding that teenagers make life-defining decisions on someone else's timeline, with little room for injury, setbacks, or simply needing more time, which is something that needs to change. As the Class of 2026 moves on from Andover, their commitments reflect not only athletic achievement, but the resilience and years of dedication that made them possible.



ARTS & LEISURE

The Phillipian, VOL. CXLIX



A Century in the Making: The Courant Returns to Its Roots with Launch Party

BENJAMIN PARK

On Friday, The Courant's launch party transformed the patio outside Susie's into a vibrant celebration of student writing, publication, and artwork. The party marked the return of a Courant tradition that had faded after the pandemic, bringing together readers, contributors, faculty members all across campus.

Founded in 1873 by students at Abbot Academy, The Courant is Andover's oldest literary magazine, and remains one of the school's significant outlets for student literature and visual art. Keren Song '26, Co-Editor-in-Chief of The Courant, elaborated on the magazine's history.

"The Courant is Andover's oldest and most premiere literary magazine. It was originally made to rival the Phillips Academy Mirror, which was the Andover boys' counterpart back then... The Courant annually publishes one issue. This is our annual issue, and it featured student prose, poetry, ceramics, paintings, photography, and the invisible work of a whole team of students working to make it happen," said Song.

Although The Courant had continued selling magazines in recent years, the board wanted this year's launch to feel like a fuller celebration of student publications. Song explained that since the pandemic, many publications had struggled with readership and activity, so the launch party

became a way to reintroduce those groups to the campus community.

"As far as we know, there were launch parties like the one that we hosted last Friday [in the past], but since the pandemic we haven't had a proper launch party. We've had more magazine sales, but we decided that it's been long enough that it's time for us to bring it back, and also at the same time reinvigorate student publications on campus that had been still struggling with the impact of the pandemic on their readership and activities. So we invited PA Food Society, the Revere, the Science and Tech Review, The Andover Edition, F-Stop, and more to our launch party. It was a joint student publication celebration where our goal was to acknowledge and celebrate student talents across many fields, especially in literature and arts," said Song.

Song described the decorations, food, and music as central to the event, while also emphasizing the joy of preparation alongside peers.

"[The launch party] was amazing. We had a color scheme going on... we had tablecloths and decorations that were black, white, gold, and silver. Putting up the decorations with my friends that I had been working with for the past year was really fun. We also had amazing food catered by Commons. We had cheese platters, berries, crackers, a sheet cake that said 'The Courant Launch



AUDREY BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN

Yuzuki Nishi '26, Grace Kim '27, Chloe Ru '27, Jess Jeon '27, and Elise Zhang '26 advertising the launch of the 2026 Courant issue.

Party 2026,' and drinks. We also had a zine-making station. The variety that we could offer, and the process of preparing [for it] with some of my closest friends, was really fun," said Song.

Song also recalled observing writers actively speaking with friends who had come to support them, as well as faculty members celebrating

their students' writing and art.

"I saw a lot of relationships [being] affirmed and strengthened by the launch party... A lot of writers were happy that their friends came to see and buy an issue and chat with them about their works. There were English department teachers and other department faculty members

there to celebrate their students' works. It was just very heartwarming to see those connections formed, fostered, and further strengthened by student voices that were reflected in The Courant. We're hoping that it'll become an annual tradition of The Courant," said Song.



AUDREY BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN

Chloe Ru '27 showcases the cover of this year's edition of The Courant.



AUDREY BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN

Devil Wears Prada 2: An Over-Accessorized Sequel That Still Has Style

CHARLIZE SOW

Most sequels disappoint fans. They bring back the original cast, place them in a slightly updated version of the first film's plot, and trust that nostalgia and the fan force of the original film will do the rest. Luckily, "The Devil Wears Prada 2" mostly resists that impulse. Twenty years after Andy Sachs (Anne Hathaway) quit and walked out on Miranda Priestly (Meryl Streep), the sequel returns to a changed media landscape, where print magazines are struggling, the fashion industry is shifting, and even Priestly is forced to confront the possibility that the world may no longer revolve around her. The film is far from perfect, but for fans of the original, it offers a satisfying return to familiar characters, while introducing enough new conflict to make its return feel worthwhile.

The plot picks up with Sachs as a respected reporter whose entire newsroom gets laid off by text during an awards gala. Priestly, meanwhile, is under fire for failing to properly cover a fashion brand accused of using sweatshop labor. In an attempt to restore the magazine's image, Runway hires Sachs as the new features editor without Priestly's approval, much to her obvious annoyance. Emily Charlton (Emily Blunt) also returns, this time as an executive at a luxury wellness brand and a rival to Runway for advertising revenue.

From the start, it is clear that Sachs is not walking

back into the same office she entered years ago in her infamous cerulean sweater. Runway is no longer the untouchable magazine it was in the first film, and that change is what makes the sequel's plot most interesting. Print subscriptions are declining, advertising dollars are moving to Instagram and TikTok, and Priestly's once final word on what is in or out is now competing with whatever some Gen-Z fashion influencer posts that morning. Because the story reflects what is actually happening in the media and fashion industries right now, the movie feels rel-

evant in a way that most sequels never bother with. Most importantly, it also creates room for real character development.

Priestly's arc is the clearest example of this. In the original film, she was terrifying because she seemed completely in control, with the power to destroy someone with a single look or pause. However, in the sequel, her power gets stripped away by the industry around her. She gets challenged by the speed of digital media, the unpredictability of influencer trends, and the cold logic of advertisers who care more about clicks than



NATHAN WU/THE PHILLIPIAN

actual talent and fashion. Seeing Priestly struggle in this way, casts her in a new light and makes the audience more invested in her story. It also gives her relationship with Andy room to develop, as the two finally start meeting as something closer to equals than they ever did in the original.

Where the film struggles, however, is in its pacing. Within the span of just two hours, the film makes an effort to cover the collapse of print journalism, unethical fashion labor, corporate branding, influencer culture,

Sachs's career crisis, Priestly's limited authority, and Emily's rivalry with Runway. Each plotline is interesting on its own, but the movie moves so quickly that the audience barely has time to take in the weight of any single one.

By far, the most unnecessary part of the film is Sach's love interest, an Australian contractor who adds nothing the film actually needs. The romance has little tension and no payoff and it pulled away from the relationships in the film that actually mattered, which are the ones between Sachs, Priestly, and Charlton. Their dynamics, from the resentment and contempt of their early Runway days to the mutual respect they have come to share, are what made this franchise so memorable in the first place. Compared to that, the romance feels less like a meaningful subplot and more like something added in to give the movie a love story it really did not need.

Overall, though "The Devil Wears Prada 2" over-accessorizes with too many storylines and is not as iconic as the original, it is still far better than it easily could have been. Rather than trapping its characters in a recycled version of the first film, the sequel centers itself around real changes within the media and fashion industries, gives its characters new conflicts to face, and lets them grow in ways the film never had room for. That alone sets it apart from most legacy sequels, and reminds audiences exactly why these characters are worth coming back to.

LOTW: Nana Efua Damptey '27 Wears Her State of Mind

**OLIVIA TEMPLE +
RAMSEY SARKISIAN**

For Nana Efua Damptey '27, an outfit begins with the day's temperature, the music she's listening to, and her own state of mind. Drawing from a closet of versatile textures, fabrics, and styles, Damptey often incorporates floral patterns, bangles, and baggy clothes into her outfits.

As spring approaches with higher temperatures and fewer puffer jackets, Damptey's prints and patterns change with the weather.

"In terms of aesthetics, I like to wear something that reminds me of flora. I like flowers, I like the spring a lot, so having floral designs and floral embroidery on my outfits is something that I like to look for. It's hard to find, but I try... When the weather's warmer, I have so much more variety and versatility because I'm not confined to solely wearing long-sleeves and sweatshirts and sweatpants and baggy jeans and stuff," said Damptey.

Damptey said she also considers her mood and state of mind when choosing what to wear, occasionally considering the music she plays that day.

"It really just depends on how well I think the day is going to go and how good my sleep was the day before. My outfits are kind of representative of my state of mind, so if I'm dressing bummy, usually I feel pretty bummy, and if I'm dressing nice, I feel pretty nice. It doesn't always require an event or something new for me to want to express myself in a way that makes myself feel the best. It usually just has to have me in a good mood," said Damptey.

Regardless of her clothing choices, Damptey often wears the same, unique pieces of jewelry. Her necklaces and bracelets appear in outfits with floral, Y2K, and more experimental pieces.

"I have these two necklaces I wear with every outfit. Partially because I lost or broke all my other necklaces. I have a cross necklace and then a necklace



ISHAAN PADMAWAR/THE PHILLIPIAN

with a painting... Also, I have been into bangles for the last two years or so, and so I usually have a bangle or two with my outfits," said Damptey.

Damptey reflected that Andover's lack of dress code was a change for her. Before attending Andover, she went to a middle school with uniforms, limiting how much she could express herself through fashion.

"When I came to Andover, I wanted to upgrade my style, but I still found myself in a place where I was unsure of what I wanted and who I wanted to express myself as. When I'm trying to find an outfit that works the best for me, I feel more comfortable wearing fitted pieces because I have more security in my body, and I feel more comfortable wearing baggy pieces because I have more security in who I am and my identity. There are certain aspects of my style that are signature to myself. My style went from something that felt distant from myself to something that genuinely expressed who I was, and my identity," said Damptey.

Damptey said her aunt influenced her style when she was younger and continues to do so, even though their styles are different.

"My state of mind is reflected through my choice of clothing, and, to me, I wish I had more means to express myself in more ways, but fashion is something that has always been unique to me, and something that I didn't necessarily feel the need to conform through. My auntie, when I was younger, my family called her 'the fashionista,' inspired my clothing as a young girl. She continues to inspire me today, even though our styles are not similar," said Damptey.

Damptey encouraged others to experiment with clothing, rather than leaving pieces unworn.

"Just wear what you want to wear. Take the experimental fit outside, it's okay. I would rather one egregiously terrible fit and know that that's not for me than never explore the depths of my closet," said Damptey.

Friday Night Tunes: The Academy Wind Ensemble

OLIVIA TEMPLE

The Academy Wind Ensemble executed jazz-inspired pieces on Friday evening during the group's last performance with its Senior musicians. The ensemble's performance consisted of "Blue Shades" and "Amazing Grace" by Frank Ticheli and "Armenian Dances" by Alfred Reed.

Beginning the concert with a standing clarinet solo, Willy Park '26 played a full page of "Blue Shades." As his last performance with the Wind Ensemble at Andover, the solo was a moment of recognition and a chance to display his talent at the concert.

"I remember when Mr. Daniels, the conductor for

Wind Ensemble, asked me if I would be down to perform this piece. At first, I was very intimidated because I've never played a piece like this before with such a big solo. But when I listened to it, it sounded really fun, although it was also intimidating at the same time. On the music sheet, it said I had to specifically stand up from my chair and face the crowd. The length was also much longer than something I was more used to in different pieces," said Park.

After working with the ensemble for three years, Conductor Ray Daniels reflected on his hope of diversifying the repertoire of the group as future events approach.

"One of my personal goals with this ensemble, when I

first arrived here, was to just bring the level to a higher degree. When I auditioned this ensemble three years ago, they were playing some very traditional marches and traditional repertoire. But there are some really amazing pieces out there and professional level pieces that I wanted to introduce to the group. But I had to build that culture of striving to play that type of literature. And this past concert was a fine example of that. Playing the Blue Shades three years ago, I don't think we would have pulled it off. Certainly not as much as we have this year. I really believe that the students have grown tremendously over these last few years," said Daniels.

Cyrus Law '27 highlighted

the laughter with his bandmates during practices and the sense of community apparent throughout the preparation process.

"[The ensemble is] pretty supportive in the sense that if I get lost, I can ask the person next to me, 'Oh, shoot, where are we?' We're not beating each other up for mistakes we make, because everyone makes mistakes. Among the whole band, I would say most of the time we're focusing on our music and watching the conductor. But there are times when we would poke fun at our friends in the other sections. But it's all in good fun. We're not trying to put each other down for it. I've been in the band for three years, so [I'm] pretty familiar and com-

fortable with the whole group and the conductor as well," said Law.

As a newer member of the Ensemble, Nicholas Jung '28 recognized the changing environment as members join and graduate.

"This year, more freshmen joined our ensemble for the trumpets and trombones and low brass, but we've performed really well the past year and learned to overcome challenges. As we practiced more and more together, we were able to be together in a sense. Whenever there was a challenge and when we couldn't play something properly, we would go over it and practice it individually," said Jung.

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Four Orchestras, Five Featured Seniors, and Through Four Centuries

AUTUMN XIA

The last orchestra concert of the academic year took place on Sunday afternoon. John Barry Hall was filled with the sounds of four ensembles: Amadeus, Camerata, Chamber, and Symphony Orchestra. The repertoire featured senior soloist Meara Wang '26 performing Shostakovich Cello Concerto 1, movements one and two, alongside Bowtox Violin Quartet, consisting of Maggie Fulop '26, Julia Song '26, Claire Wang '26, and Annabelle Wu '26, performing Vivaldi Concerto for 4 Violins in B minor.

Dylan Wan '28, concertmaster of Amadeus, described the theme of his ensemble as summer. Amadeus performed a program built around brightness and momentum, intending to signal the closing of the school year.

"The first piece Amadeus played is a very energetic piece. We're going for a summer vibe. Like Dr. Aureden said, it was a 'you're so ready for summer' type of piece. The second piece that we

played was also simply called Summer. So, it's safe to say Amadeus was really going for a summer vibe to get everyone excited for the upcoming break as we try to convey the energy of the pieces through our playing," said Wan '28.

Holly Barnes, director of Camerata Orchestra and Instructor in Music, designed the program around contrast. With choices including light and lilting in the Gavotte from Grieg's Holberg Suite and being set against the weightier Mendelssohn Symphony No.10, Barnes discussed how the Mendelssohn came to be on the program through student Tommy Parr's '29 initiative.

"I loved listening to Camerata, and I have loved working with them. They're a really wonderful group of musicians who are really dedicated to the group... Tommy Parr suggested the Mendelssohn. I actually didn't know the piece. I've played a lot of Mendelssohn symphonies, but I've never played that specific one or conducted it. After I went and listened to it, I thought that it'll be a great

piece for Camerata. It's very dynamic and exciting, really great for young players. I then also chose Holberg because of their contrasting styles as the Greek was much lighter and the Mendelssohn was much more serious and virtuoso," said Ms. Barnes.

Barnes coached the Bowtox Violin Quartet as the group prepared Vivaldi's concerto. Fulop '26 reflected on this long-awaited collaboration with friends and her growth as a musician at Andover.

"I'm somebody who gets really nervous for performances, so my goal for this performance was to be as not nervous as possible and just have a good time, because you don't get these kinds of opportunities very often... We [Bowtox Violin Quartet] decided way back in Freshman year that we wanted to do this, and so it's been planned for a while. We also had a couple of performance opportunities at trusty events, and at [All-School Meeting]... When I came here, I honestly sucked. I improved a lot at Andover, and I think I was very motivated by having a

lot of friends in the orchestra, so take advantage of all the amazing peers you have around you," said Fulop.

Adelyne Liu '28 pointed to soloist Meara Wang's performance as a highlight.

"The cello concerto that they played really stood out to me because it was so different from the other pieces that were played during the concert, and I really enjoyed it. It's the last piece someone would cry to, but I was so moved by her playing that I started crying in the middle of the concert," said Liu.

Derek Jacoby, director of both Symphony and Chamber Orchestras and Instructor in Music, described the orchestra's role in supporting the Senior soloists and highlighted the concert's overarching theme, "Through the Centuries." Spanning four centuries of music, the program also offered a rare opportunity to perform a work by composer Joseph Bologne.

"For the music with the soloists, the soloist is given as much freedom as they want musically. It's the job of the orchestra to frame and fit

that autonomy, and always be ready to react to what the soloist might do... Joseph Bologne is a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) composer from the French colony of Guadalupe, and it is not very common to have underrepresented composers of the classical era. So to be able to perform a work of his and give that story some further publicity was another goal of ours," said Jacoby.

Despite the emotional departure of the class of 2026 in just a few weeks, the Chamber Orchestra and a few Seniors, such as Gu, still have concerts in the near future. Ian Gu '26 found himself reflecting as the end of the program drew near.

"Before the orchestra began Kaiser Waltzer by Strauss, I thought to myself that this would be the last piece of music that I would be performing for [Andover]. So I was feeling a little bit sentimental before we started. I really tried to enjoy and savor the last regular orchestra concert that I would have at Andover," said Gu.

Art Outside of the Frame: Met Gala 2026 Best and Worst Dressed

BEST DRESSED:

EMMA CHAMBERLAIN IN MUGLER:

Dressed in a stunning yellow number, Emma Chamberlain's look of the night was a classic interpretation of the Met Gala theme. The dress stuns with a beautiful swirl of colors over the waterlike texture of its fabric, capturing vibrant yellow around the bodice that transitions through to many other colors into deep indigo around its train. The handpainted gown was a product of 40 hours of work from artist Anna Deller-Yee, and Chamberlain's body became its canvas. By combining visual art directly with fashion, Chamberlain truly became a human vessel of art.

EILEEN GU IN IRIS VAN HERPEN AND A.A. MURAKAMI:

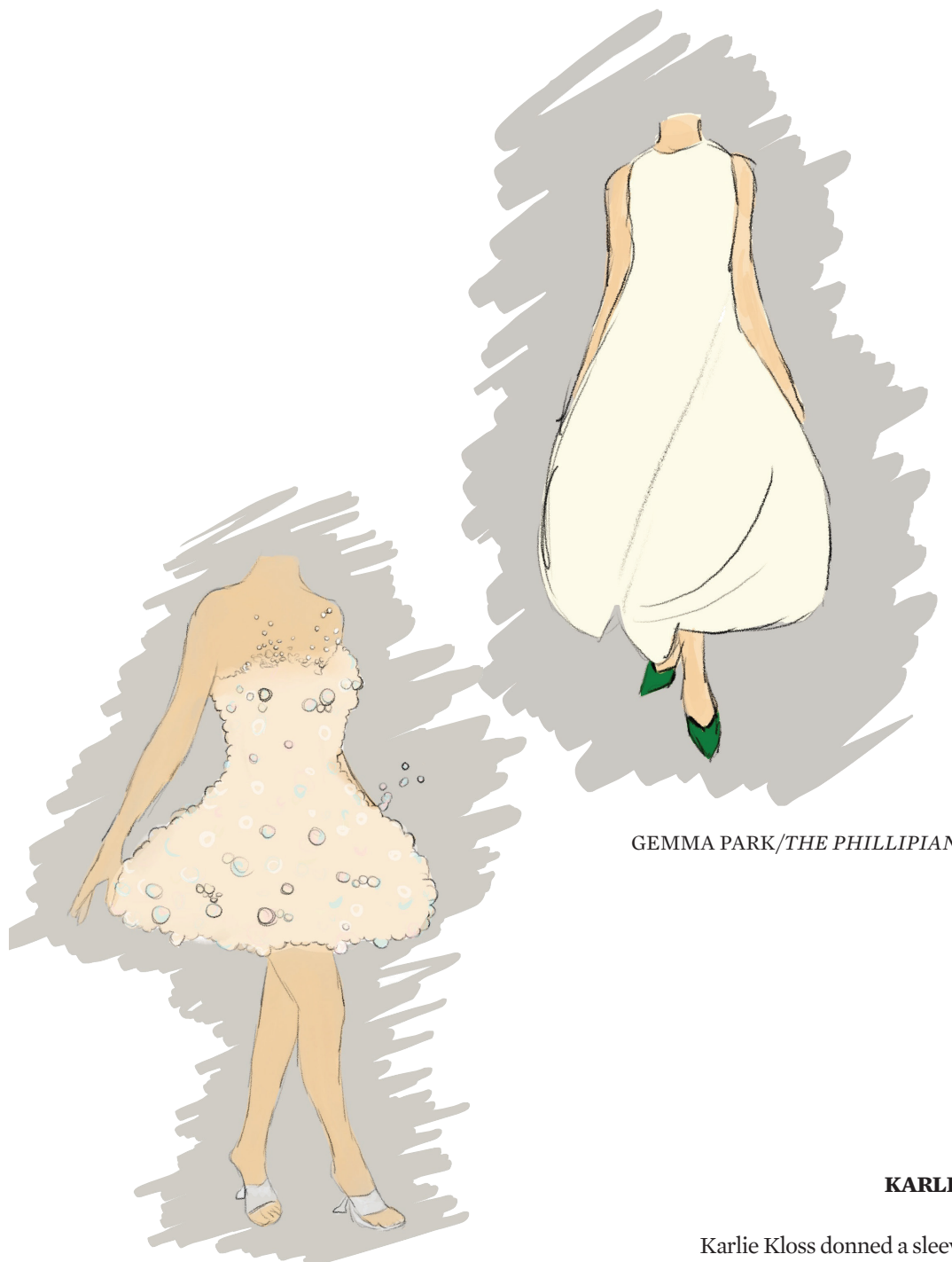
Eileen Gu's "Airo" gown features 15,000 glass spheres meticulously attached to the garment as well as microprocessors physically emitting bubbles that provided a surreal and animated tone to her look. The designers Iris van Herpen and A.A. Murakami play with the ephemeral nature of bubbles, making a temporary fixture a permanent one. This contrast coupled with the dress's striking silhouette is only aided by the intention behind the gown. The garment is a celebration of motion and nature within humanity, while utilizing science for its creation. As an athlete, these aspects of humanity and art are intertwined for Gu, and there is no better way to express this than wearing it.

RACHEL ZEGLER IN PRABAL GRUNG:

The very first thing you notice about the outfit is what you cannot see. Rachel Zegler graces the famous Met steps in a stunning ivory white dress and a stark silk blindfold covering her eyes. She wears the fitted white corset very elegantly, and its clean yet bold statement was refreshing to see on the carpet. The blindfold with the detailing on the bodice created a character of both innocence and vulnerability. The look is an elegant homage to the painting "The Execution of Lady Jane Grey" by Paul Delaroche. Zegler's look perfectly captures its poignant beauty.

HAYLEY FAN

The human body is a vessel for fashion. From dazzling classical art references to bold looks exploring the scientific capabilities of craftsmanship, this year's "Costume Art" themed Met Gala dove into the connection between art and humanity.



GEMMA PARK/THE PHILLIPIAN

WORST DRESSED:

ROSÉ IN SAINT LAURENT:

While there wasn't much wrong with the dress itself, the only glaring error was that it wasn't much at all.

The jeweled bird paired with the Tiffany and Co. diamond necklace is indeed a good reference to "The Birds" by Georges Braque, but it has already been a staple in Saint Laurent couture. The dress overall felt like an attempt to play things safe, but that is challenging for a theme so especially demanding of interpretation and detail. In Rosé's case, one cannot help but feel the potential for something more.

CARDI B IN MARC JACOBS:

Cardi B's look was certainly a bold one. The dress was inspired by "The Doll" by surrealist artist Hans Bellmer. The 10 photographs that comprised this work explored themes of the uncanny, violence, and trauma as well as the objectification of the body. The dress features black lace accents over multiple bulbous bunches of fabric in the shoulder and train areas. While the look does do the inspired work justice, it is quite uncomfortable to look at. Perhaps that was her purpose for wearing the garment.

KARLIE KLOSS IN DIOR:

Karlie Kloss donned a sleeveless white Dior gown for the Met Gala 2026, paired with a purple flower in her hair and green heels. While the fabric and sewing is quite beautiful, the inspiration for this dress is unclear. There are some things to work on with this look. The pure white is a statement, but one might find it difficult to find much content and coherence in her look as there is basically only white. While the shape of the dress is interesting and adds to her overall image, it's not the most flattering and can look awkward.

Lillian Montalto

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