

## “Sack is Life”: Andover Students’ Growing Infatuation with Hacky Sack



CINDY ZHOU/THE PHILLIPIAN

Noah Pare '26, Rowan Leckerling '26, Jaylen Edmonds '27, Shock Ingram '26 sack on the Great Lawn.

IAN S. KIM & OLIVIA TEMPLE

With the advent of warm weather, a new form of competition has quietly taken over the minds of Andover students. Between classes, on the Great Lawn (Lawn), and during free periods, circles of students can be found fixated on a tightly knitted bag kept suspended in the air. Hacky sack, associated with 1990s culture, has made a national comeback and has now emerged as one of Andover’s casual activities.

One avid enjoyer, Kieran Kolar '28, described his switch from Spikeball to hacky sack. He cited its accessibility and easygoing nature as the activity’s greatest strengths.

“Right now, I like hacky sack more, but maybe that’s because it’s very popular at the moment. If you asked me before this month, I probably would’ve said Spikeball... I’d say hacky sack is more accessible. You can do it wherever, whenever, but with Spikeball, you need the net and that’s big to carry around. I’d say they’re pretty even, though, because hacky sack is about spreading sack, not hate, whereas Spikeball is more team-based and can get pretty intense,” said

Kolar. Another player, Kaden McNeice '28, similarly pointed to hacky sack’s accessibility as a strength. He remarked that it wasn’t difficult to get the hang of the game’s adaptable techniques.

“I don’t think you need to be super athletic to play hacky sack. After you play a couple times, you start to pick up the fundamentals. Once you have the fundamentals down at hacky sack, then you’re already good at the game and basically everyone can play. That’s what makes it such a unique game. That’s how it differs from games like Spikeball and other beach games, is that you don’t necessarily need to be the fastest or the strongest or even the most athletic,” said McNeice.

Fatima Bah '29 is one regular player who plays hacky sack three to four times a week. Her preferred location is the Lawn. She recalled one of the many moments that hacky sack has brought the community together.

“A funny moment was when we were playing with someone else’s sack, and then we broke it. Then we had to go to the makerspace and stitch it back together. It was funny, and then we were talking to this woman in the makerspace and she makes a lot of clothes. It was interesting because we

got to meet her because of the broken hacky sack, and she was a really interesting person and she taught us about sewing,” said Bah.

Kolar noted that Andover might benefit from a hacky sack ranking system. Nevertheless, whether that can be implemented or not remains to be seen.

“It’s also not super competitive, so you don’t need to get worked up about [hacky sack]. They should get Andover ranked, though. Why is Andover not ranked yet?” said Kolar.

With summer quickly approaching, the question of hacky sack’s future has risen. Will the game catch on next year, or will it fade into memory? McNeice compared the two games and gave his advice.

“I would absolutely recommend [playing] hacky sack to somebody who hasn’t played. It’s an easy enough game to pick up and get good at, once you get good with the fundamentals. Everyone’s out there playing for fun, so no one’s going to like to make fun of you for being bad or not being good at it. It’s a stress-free game, and it’s all for fun. I would absolutely recommend it. I also recommend Spikeball too, it’s really fun as well. They’re both two very good summer games to be able to play,” said McNeice.

## Andover Admissions Aims to Expand Rural Recruitment Through STARS Initiative

ANGELA GUO

In an effort to expand outreach to rural and small-town communities across the United States, Andover’s Admissions Office has launched the STARS (Small Town and Rural Students) Boarding School Initiative in partnership with Choate Rosemary Hall, Deerfield Academy, The Hotchkiss School, and St. Paul’s School. The initiative is an offshoot of the STARS College Network.

In the 2026 State of the Academy (SOTA), 6.0 percent of respondents identified as currently living in a rural community, compared with 30.7 percent urban and 63.3 percent suburban. The STARS Boarding School Initiative aims to increase awareness of and access to college-preparatory boarding school education for students from small-town and rural communities across the U.S., according to an email to *The Phillipian* from the Admissions Office attributed to Assistant Director of Admissions Chris Powers, Associate Dean and Director of Admissions Jill Thompson, Assistant Head of School for Admission and Financial Aid Jim Ventre '79, and Associate Director of Admissions Sarah Carroll.

The Admissions Office formally launched the initiative last summer after reviewing prior rural recruitment efforts and consulting with external partners.

“The planning for [the STARS Boarding School Initiative] was driven by a desire to formalize and expand upon previous outreach efforts. The admissions office analyzed the history of rural recruitment to determine which approaches yield success and which did not. The team explored ongoing rural efforts at the university level as well as the strategies used by peer institutions. Coupled with insights from rural educators, community-based organizations and leads from past and current Andover families, and in partnership with four peer boarding schools (Choate, Deerfield, Hotchkiss, and St. Paul’s), we formally launched this initiative last summer,” said the Admissions Office.

Next year will mark Andover’s second admissions cycle with the rural recruitment initiative. The Admissions Office described the initiative’s current partnerships and outreach efforts.

“[Head of School] Raynard Kington initiated a deeper commitment to our rural outreach, and he continues to support our efforts. In addition to our partnership with

STARS, we have also begun to grow other partnerships with the following organizations: National Rural Educators, Camp Susan Curtis, Future Farmers of America, Quiz Bowl and the Andover Class of 1965. We have also been participating in STARS webinars, and attending rural events, such as the Machias Blueberry festival, in Washington County, Maine. We have also engaged in targeted recruitment travel for this effort, like the Ten Schools Admission Organization Mountain Towns trip this spring,” said the Admissions Office.

Looking ahead, the Admissions Office hopes the initiative will expand Andover’s rural enrollment while ensuring that the school is the right fit for prospective students.

“Our hope is that we will continue to grow our population of rural students at Andover, but we want to make sure—as we always do—that we are bringing students to Andover who will be able to thrive in our academic program and take full advantage of the Andover experience. That takes careful and thoughtful recruitment and candidate cultivation as we want to be certain the match is exactly right for students coming to us from rural communities!” said the Admissions Office.

## Academic Departments Begin Formulating Response to AI Usage

SOPHIA FANG & NICCOLO LEE-SUK

According to the 2026 State of the Academy (SOTA), 88.3% of students use Artificial Intelligence (AI) for some academic/educational purpose, chief among them to explain concepts, create study guides or practice questions, and summarize texts or information. As AI becomes increasingly present in student work, faculty across departments have begun reassessing how to harness these tools in the classroom.

The Natural Sciences Division recently held a day-long workshop with Hanspeter Pfister, An Wang Professor of Computer Science at Harvard University, who led faculty in reflecting on AI’s productive uses, limitations, and implications for students. Chair in Physics John Rogers described his main takeaways. “We have to really be as

proactive as we can be in figuring out what [AI] means for our students and ourselves because, whether we like it or not, it’s here and it’s transforming the way that many things are done. We don’t really have the luxury of ignoring it. Another big idea was that we want to... create assignments where if it’s going to help students to use AI that we’ve built that into the assignment so that everyone gets equal benefit from it,” said Rogers.

Brian Faulk, Head of the Natural Sciences Division, elaborated on a point from the discussion that the Division hopes to explore next year. “One of the things that Professor Pfister encouraged us to do is create AI-literate graduates, or at least that’s something that Harvard feels

Continued on A5, Column 1

## Pentatonix Member Kevin Olusola '06 Shares Journey to Celloboxing



COURTESY OF LISA CZECH

Kevin Olusola '06 performed a dynamic setlist to a packed Cochran Chapel on Saturday evening.

JEREMIAH NUNEZ & ELIZABETH SAKA

Students filing into the Cochran Chapel last Friday were greeted by a video of Pentatonix member Kevin Olusola '06 composing a celloboxing cover of Down by Marian Hill. Moments later, he walked out onto the stage himself for the last All-School Meeting (ASM) of the year. Olusola reflected on his experiences as a new Upper and the lessons he learned throughout his career, followed by a performance from the William Thomas Gospel Choir and discussion with Peter Cirelli, Instructor in Music.

Olusola’s speech touched on the power of saying no and embracing originality. Draw-

ing from his experiences at Andover, Olusola spoke on the message he sought to convey in an interview with *The Phillipian*.

“I see these students as a band of misfits because they’re so different from their peers or the spaces they came from. Even though they may feel crazy at times for being who they are, misfits aren’t broken. They’re originals. I want them to know that their uniqueness is a gift meant to change the world,” said Olusola.

Cirelli, who previously taught Olusola, arranged his visit to campus as part of the

Continued on A5, Column 4

## Amy Falls '82, P'19, P'21 Reflects on Board Presidency Ahead of Leadership Transition

ANGELA GUO

Amy Falls '82, P'19, P'21, will conclude her term as President of the Board of Trustees on June 30. Falls has served as Board President since 2019 and as a Charter Trustee since 2012. Falls will be succeeded by Eric Zinterhofer '89, P'18, '19, who currently serves as Chair of the Head of School Search Committee.

As the first woman to serve as President of the Board in Andover’s history, Falls reflected on the milestone in relation to the wom-

en who shaped Andover before her.

“I look forward to the day when that’s not worth commenting on, which will happen. But I’m very honored to have played that role, and I think it takes a chain. I look at all the women who have really contributed to the history of this institution, starting with Madame Sarah Abbot, who was determined to get a girls’ school [Abbot Academy]. And then [the 14th Head of School]

Continued on A5, Column 1

Commentary, A2

### The Problem With Always Being Better

Andover should move away from seeking validation and personalize growth.

Eighth Page, A8

### Prom Roasts

This article actually deserves 17 Million Views.

Sports, B1

### NEPSAC Champions and A/E Victors

Girls Tennis defeated Hotchkiss 5-1 to win NEPSAC, the defeated Exeter 8-1.

Arts, B7

### Strings, Beatboxing, and a Message to Be Original

Kevin Olusola '06 wowed a packed chapel with cello-beatboxing and an inspiring story about embracing individuality.

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Editorial

## Letter to the Reader

Promposals erupt across campus like the blooming flowers (some gone viral). Pollen swirls in the hot, humid air. It seems that soon enough, a new class of Andover students will arrive, and all of us will find ourselves a grade higher. In honor of our last paper, here is some advice for the next school year that we've collected over our time.

1. Be proud of yourself, shamelessly.  
Many may think of Andover students as a binary. We either put down our accomplishments or we boost them to the moon. However, both sides of this coin risk denying the beauty in what we've accomplished. At a school where nearly 80% of students have felt academically insecure according to the 2026 State of the Academy, we need to let ourselves be proud. Proud of ourselves the same way we're proud of our friends when they come smiling out of a test, or when they achieve a personal record at their sport. We should let ourselves shine, and do so without shame.

2. Experience embarrassment, and even humiliation.  
Andover is often named a 'pressure cooker.' Its perceived demand for perfection can make the fear of looking foolish seem paralyzing. One might refuse to raise their hand during a class discussion in fear of saying something subpar. Similarly, they might put up a nonchalant front to peers, stifling their emotions so as to seem in control. These acts of avoiding embarrassment limit us to what we already know. We should take risks to channel our emotions and curiosity, even if we might be embarrassed at first. Ask out your crush. Pose the stupid question. Start a Substack. The fear of embarrassment is much worse than the cost of inaction.

3. Compliment people.  
Remember that one compliment you were given? The one that still pops up in your head sometimes, giving you a little smile? That could be someone else, smiling over something you

said. Now, don't just go buttering everyone up. But if you see something you appreciate, even for a second, mention it.

4. Cherish. Your. Teachers.  
At Andover, it seems that we see our teachers almost everywhere: at least three times a week in class, around the paths, in Paresky Commons, and, on occasion, downtown. What makes Andover unique is that it is a place where students and faculty co-exist. So, we should take advantage of this dynamic and ask ourselves if we've truly made an effort to get to know them. Greet your teachers around campus. Ask them about their weekend happenings with genuine curiosity. Invite them to sit with you at lunch or to your athletic event. Recognize your teachers as real people.

5. Go Somewhere New.  
Don't always take the 'Main Street.' Coming into freshman year, some of us may have had our sights set on the clubs we'd join and the things we'd do. We may have tried our best to stay steadfast on such a path. However, by fixing ourselves to predetermined routes and outcomes, we lose out on the creativity and abundance that can come only with exposure. Showing up to a friend's club meeting, if it doesn't fit on your resume. Taking the scenic route, just to have one more conversation (it could inspire your next big idea). Cringey as it is, time flies at Andover, and there are infinite routes that can be taken through its journey. Take ones that count.

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

## Andover's Rate-My-Teacher Culture is Getting Out of Hand

JEANNIE KANG



"She's horrible; avoid her as much as you can." "He gave me a four! He sucks."

A normalized habit taints our community: students discussing teachers as if they were emotionless robots on sale, readily bracing for harsh criticisms and offensive gossip. Many even personally attack teachers based on their subjective experience, expecting educators to uphold a golden standard of morality. On one hand, constructive criticism enables teachers to improve their classes and provide the optimal experience for their students. However, the culture now crosses the line of helpful feedback into unjustified and exaggerated attacks on their personhood. As students, it is our duty to clearly distinguish the line between constructive criticism and addressing teachers without the grace of their humanity.

When we choose which product to purchase at a store, we pick apart their qualities, weigh the pros and cons, and impose our subjective standard of a "good product" to determine their utility. The same happens with teachers. Stu-

dents each have very arbitrary standards of a "good teacher," such as how "well" they grade, how kind they are, and how early they let students out. Once a teacher doesn't fit their standards, they are labelled as a "bad" teacher, tossed around in gossip and jokes to express absurdity. However, we must recognize that there are varying definitions of a good educator, from detailed explanations to entertaining lectures. And even if the teacher does not teach in the most effective way possible, that does not justify students attacking a teacher's entire personhood, equating one's teaching abilities to their worth as a human being. Much like how students all vary in character and talents, teachers also differ in their teaching methods, personalities, and ways of expressing care. Thus, we should not designate them into a category of a "good" or a "bad" teacher, merely based on our subjective experiences.

It may be difficult to determine the fine line between constructive criticism and objectification. At times, it seems as though harsh words or phrases are necessary to provide criticism to teachers, especially because they belong to a place of authority. Despite this difficulty, finding that line is important in providing helpful feedback while also maintaining a respectful manner. At times, teachers may make real mistakes, beyond merely grading harshly or letting students out late. The first step to approaching a discussion with a teacher from a good faith is to acknowledge their humanity. It is fair to hold educators to a higher moral and personal standard, as they are often viewed



JIA-YI ZHI / THE PHILLIPIAN

as the ultimate role models for students. However, we must understand that they are still human beings, fallible to mistakes and emotions. It is nearly impossible to please all students, and it can be unfair and hurtful to criticize teachers for failing to meet the needs of every student based on their subjective standards. Teachers are not machines, so it is important for students to give them the grace to make mistakes, explore, and take time to help out students.

However, this does not mean that we should completely ignore the mistakes that teachers may make or the concerns we have about a class. It is natural that teachers may accidentally say something or take an action that does not suit your needs as a student. In this case, we have to directly approach them in an open mindset, understanding their perspective and where the mistake came from to have an honest conversation about how to move forward. Despite the

difference between the experiences of a teacher and a student, we can still have productive and helpful conversations without crossing the line and acting disrespectfully behind their backs. Respectful communication allows us to bridge the gap and view teachers as humans with emotions and experiences, without treating them as merely machines.

Although respectful communication is the ideal outcome, students' actions of talking about their teachers are also partially understandable. It can be frustrating when we are given a grade or disappointing feedback, or when a teacher hurts our feelings. Critiquing teachers in harsh language is often an expression of such culminated anger and exhaustion of factors that are beyond our control. Thus, rather than blaming only the students or the teachers, we should create a campus culture that encourages dialogue between the two groups without condemning students for expressing their true feelings. Students and teachers compose the core of our community, and creating a friendly relationship between these groups is the first step to establishing a warm campus environment.

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CORRECTIONS:

# The Problem With Always Being Better

JUNWOO (JACOB) SHIN



J. NUÑEZ / THE PHILLIPIAN

Whenever I open an app on social media, I am bombarded with content that seems to want to make my progress insufficient. From raging online cultures like “looksmaxxing” or the subtle encouragement of self-comparison, the modern world has a taste for capitalizing on feelings of personal inadequacy. The line between inspiration and insecurity has now become blurred, and self-growth is no longer internally driven but constantly held up against external standards that only seem to rise with time. Everyone online seems to have their lives figured out: waking up at 5:00 A.M. to go on a run and completing hours of work every day, the only way to “win the day” is to end it feeling exhausted. Improvement only becomes meaningful when it confirms that we were not enough to begin with.

While the underlying pressure of “self-improvement” has become prominent everywhere, it is in places like Andover where its burdens become exacerbated. The structure of this new culture mirrors that of a highly rigorous and competitive academic environment in

that they both place emphasis on measurable performance and outcomes. Both create the illusion that growth and progress are goals to be completed, rather than something to be experienced. Andover students are rooted deeply into a culture of validation based on success, due to the high standards they are held to by others and the expectations they hold for themselves. It has become normalized to hold oneself accountable for not living up to these standards, which are sometimes unrealistic. This mentality is reflected on the way we formulate new habits we pick up online, and how we plan on following through with them. Often, our habits are derived from our desire to be better, more productive, and more disciplined in whatever we strive to be successful in. This constant pursuit of “more,” while effective in the short term, eventually takes its toll on us in the form of discontent and a perpetual sense of inadequacy. Each time we set our goals they seem to drift further away out of reach, because we begin with the assumption that our starting point is one of lack. True growth is not found through chasing validation and proving oneself, but from recognizing genuine progress: maintaining habits consistently, recovering from setbacks quickly, and appreciating small moments of growth that seemed insufficient before.

The relentless cycle of unrealistic ambitions also induces several emotional consequences, the first being a burnout masked as discipline. We often believe that taking a break from our pursuits is not a restorative strategy but rather a source of guilt. Formulating a self-improvement plan often traps



CARINA PAIK / THE PHILLIPIAN

us between two equally harmful choices: either to continue pushing ourselves through self-destructive practice to feel productive, or to step away and view ourselves as incapable and inadequate for choosing to quit. Choosing the former means that every decision we make must be justified and contributing towards our goals. The latter option evokes a sense of doubt in our ability to stay disciplined, and whether our aspirations were genuine. This insecurity has affected my personal growth the most, as my failure to meet my own expectations led me to believe that I simply was not dedicated enough, and my desperation was not authentic. I felt indolent for not living up to my ideal self, and this only pushed me to make resolutions even more impractical as a means to compensate for my past incompetencies. Sometimes, after finishing hours of homework and studying, I would open social media only to be met with videos upon videos of people telling me that I was not dedicated enough, and that I needed to sacrifice everything

for my goals. Even moments where I should have been proud of my productivity felt meaningless, overshadowed by the reminder that someone else was always doing more.

As ambitious students, we tend to hold ourselves to unreasonably high standards in hopes that even a pursuit of them will lead to growth. While this is not entirely untrue, it is also important to recognize how this might affect our perception of ourselves. A difficult resolution, especially one that focuses on becoming “better,” assumes that the person we are now is not enough. This not only prevents unconditional self-worth, but also undermines previous growth.

Constantly striving to become “better” can prevent people from appreciating who they actually are. The belief that one will always have room for improvement disregards their prior efforts. When worded correctly, the culture of “maxxing” can be perceived as a forward-looking mindset, but in most cases it is an excuse to lower the stakes of previous resolutions

that have failed. Treating self-improvement as a perpetual, urgent concept takes away from the strength that exists in gradual, consistent development. True growth builds on attainable goals as a cumulative effort. It is through this action that one can take the time to realize the progress they have made.

I hope that as a community, we strive for improvements that are not strenuous assignments but intentional journeys of growth. I hope we can recognize that improvement does not demand a rejection of self, but an acceptance of it. The most meaningful improvement we can make is the cultivation of a healthier mindset for ourselves; true growth lies in learning how to acknowledge progress, taking breaks without guilt, and appreciating oneself while making an effort to become even better.

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# Are Teenage Queer Rockstars Born to Die?

AURELIA ZHANG



A. SHU / THE PHILLIPIAN

Damiano David, the singer of Måneskin, released his new songs “Silverlines” and “Born with a Broken Heart” a while ago. The subsequent announcement of his world tour, including his frequent appearances in the United States and English media, officially marked the beginning of his ambitious solo journey. Damiano shared his post-Måneskin life on Instagram with his girlfriend, like any other celebrity showing off their relationships justified by society, the model hot boyfriend and picture-perfect girlfriend, conventionally attractive and affluent, enjoying themselves in Europe and the privileges of an American Citizen. The Italian teenager succumbs to the English-speaking world like many others whose minds did not fit into the standardized *Lingua Franca*—a homogenous, standardized language that allows me to speak to you right now, established by the hegemony of a specific cultural sphere.

You see people grow old, want to settle down, it’s nothing surprising. I should not be surprised. Half of their first album *Teatro d’Ira* was in Italian, flaunting their artistic prowess through rage, rock, and rebellion. Even their song reflecting upon the passage of time, *VENT’ANNI*, was full of youthful optimism: to explain the meaning of color to those who only saw black and white. It was

poetry; it was a group of teenagers dressed in sexually suggestive, gender-non-conforming outfits trying to leave their mark on the world. It was Damiano and Thomas kissing on stage in Poland and declaring how they believed that everyone should be able to do this without fear.

The utter irony in Damiano’s transformation is how he now chooses to carve his own identity for the world Måneskin once poked fun at in their songs like “GOSSIP.” The exotic Italian boyfriend for the perfect American princess in a Hollywood wonderland, with his native tongue that once dared to denounce the world, now just an interesting “perk” so desperately trying to distinguish itself amongst the “privileged” who were born into status and a dominant language. The spectacle-ification of a non-majority culture. The mouth that once announced their manifesto to the world—in *casa mia non c’è Dio*—becomes nothing more than the fantasy of the heterosexual world with the exotic

lover, their stereotypical *ti amo*. Instead of *ti voglio bene*—for your friends, family, and your country.

Listening to Damiano’s new songs made me feel a deep fear of growing up for the first time. I’m afraid of the urge to settle down, to give up all that I once held to be true, and to fall back into the endless cycles that our ancestors once endured in silence. I’m afraid of a society that urges women to lean on impulsive decisions and stay in the household, which forces us to settle back to the norm. I fear that I may, someday in the future, lose the courage to stand up for the ones that I love, to put aside the part of myself that others call naivete because of my age. I fear myself, and thus I fear in vain.

Are queer rock stars born to die? Is the transience of youth the reason for its allure? I thought about the artistic movements and dreams crushed before they had the time to mature. I thought about brilliant minds who burn out before their 30s,

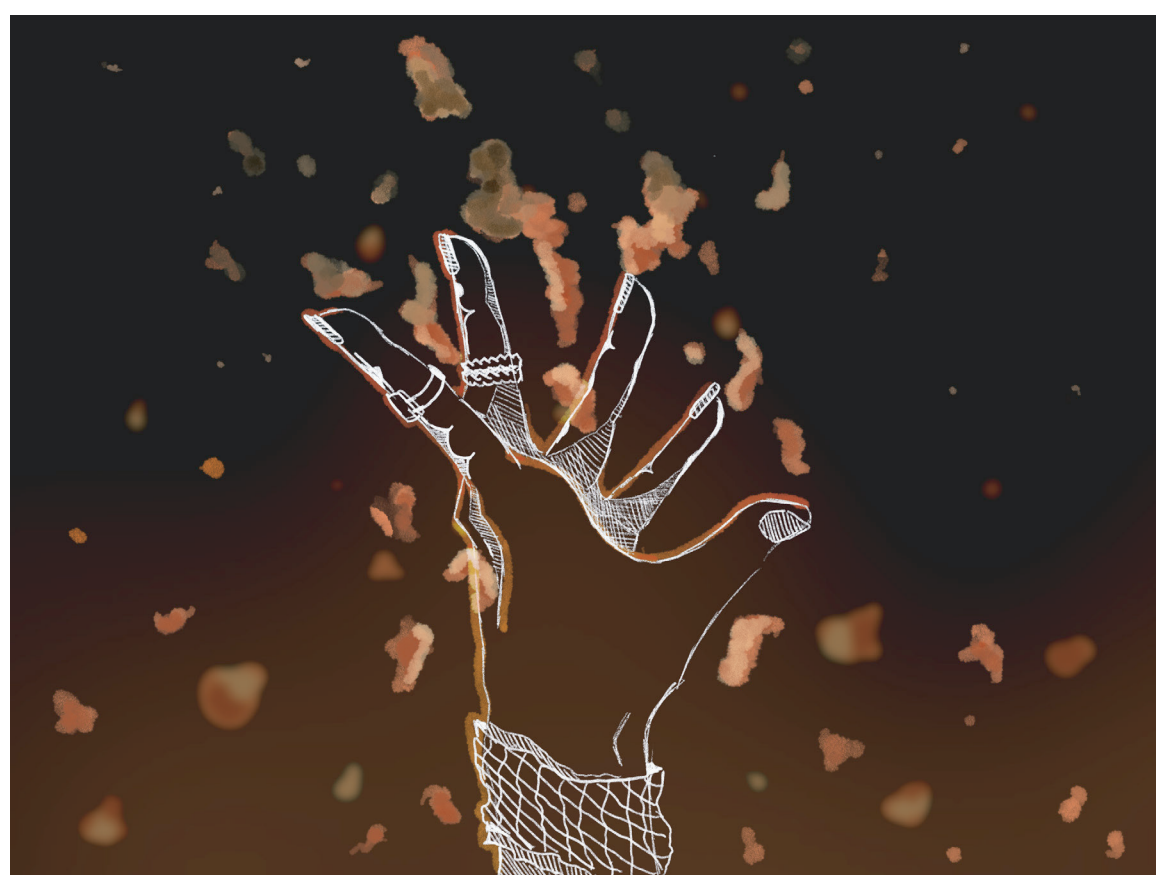
spending the rest of their time living up to their beginning. Students whose lives ended just after they realized what they would die for. The stars that faded away into oblivion before their light was seen by anyone. The non-stop death of sparks in everyone’s mind, each holding the potential of materializing into a morbid monster or a miracle. Those who never had

## I fear myself, and thus I fear in vain.

the chance to learn what it was like to live before time takes its toll... I thought of the infants who passed away at birth.

The ones who lived on became teenagers: bold and ambitious. The curves of their bodies do not yet show the sharp distinctions of sex; their voices are still rather homogeneous. They are first seen as people to be respected and connected with, instead of potential partners for sexual or romantic activity;

CAMILA CHEN / THE PHILLIPIAN



they are governed by thoughts and not desires. They are humans coming of age, preparing to take on the responsibilities and rights of a citizen. They are teenagers, who still haven’t given up on the search for their utopia, who stretch their fingers out into the cold to grasp the glowing embers of justice and their own meaning of life. Eventually, that hand learns the comfort of their ancestral hut and prefers to stay inside.

We all gain inertia, eventually. Secluded, revolutionary groups in history settle into traditional empires, slipping and falling into their own tyranny, expanding into oblivion. It all dies away when age and society introduce yourself before you do. With the declining neuroplasticity and empiricism settling in, we no longer search for answers in new ideas but instead turn to the past. It’s how our ancestors learned to live—to specialize, to remember set patterns, so it will help us survive too, according to what we learned from our past.

I still love the poetic familiarity of *Il Ballo dalla Vita* and the remnants of their outright denouncement in *Gasoline*. I miss the times when I could take inspiration from their all-black outfits and thick eyeliner. I’ll banish my fear of the darkness (“*Il Paura del Buio*”) with their fierce drumbeats and guitar riffs, their voice nowhere appealing to the wider audience. I couldn’t play these songs in public or at karaoke because I’d be the only one singing along with my broken Italian, and looking back, it might have been a strategic choice to start writing in English. But old times are old times, and we must give people the space to grow, mature, and condense into the ones they need to be, albeit far from the ones they want to be.

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# What “Temptation Island” Shows Us About Andover Culture

SIMRAN SHAH



COURTESY OF SIMRAN SHAH

We all have our guilty pleasures, and if you know anything about me, stupid displays of romance are mine. I just finished watching Season 2 of “Temptation Island”, my absolute favorite reality TV show, and I can’t stop thinking about it. Basically an even more drama-filled “Love Island”, “Temptation Island” brings together four committed couples looking to test their loyalty and separates the men and women into two separate villas with 12 singles each. Even worse, every episode, the four girls and the four guys gather separately to watch clips of what their significant other has been doing in the villa. In other words, it’s Simran Shah’s personal heaven.

It’s easy to dismiss this as “trash” reality TV, but I was strangely reminded of our own Andover community. “Temptation Island” is different from other reality TV shows because instead of singles competing to form the best couple, relationships are put under extreme stressors, disguised as a tropical island getaway, and told to resist. The show isolates couples, removes their normal support systems, and surrounds them with strangers, leaving them entirely vulnerable. Andover does something similar, academically

and socially. Students are constantly placed in environments that test priorities, whether it’s grades versus sleep, authenticity versus performance, or individuality versus conformity. At Andover, we are often unaware of how our environment shapes our unconscious decisions and throws off our routine, similarly to how the intense pressure, visibility, and temptation ultimately change the outcome of what had seemed like committed relationships on “Temptation Island”.

At both Andover and Temptation Island, people enter feeling confident, a facade that almost always shatters within the first few days. On Temptation Island, contestants enter as couples, looking at the show as a test. No one wants to believe they’ll fail or that they are not cut out for it, and they reassure each other of their commitment to each other before they are sent off separately with no contact. However, as soon

**Andover students may arrive with clear academic and social priorities, but those often shift as soon as pressure builds and assignments pile up.**

as they enter the villas, their issues with their partner are amplified as they see all these singles as better fits for them, and see clips of their partner often taken out of context, among other things. Similarly, at Andover, we start here fresh off the high of feeling validated from



HARRY ZHOU / THE PHILLIPIAN

being accepted. None of us are truly prepared for the imposter syndrome, the stress, and the isolation that boarding school brings. You’re deprived of your support systems, doing more mental, physical, or emotional work than you’ve probably done in your life, and surrounded by people who are better than you at what you previously were the best at doing. Andover students may arrive with clear academic and social priorities, but those often shift as soon as pressure builds and assignments pile up. Our “normal” changes as we are exposed to comparison culture, and we wish to take harder classes because it’s “normal” or join way too many clubs than we are able to support.

Another aspect of the show I found similar to our school culture is the post-decision jus-

tification that the contestants on “Temptation Island” often make, as well as how visibility affects their choices. After their initial confidence shatters, the contestants often cave into temptation. Post-decision justification is when contestants and students alike then turn to validating their decisions, claiming this was the reason they came on the show, and that they’ve learned about themselves from this experience, without actually taking any accountability. At Andover, we often justify taking on too many things, as the need to compete becomes the primary goal.

“Temptation Island” is one of those shows that I just felt stupid watching. Other people were probably doing homework, practicing a sport or an instrument, or working on

their masterpiece. Meanwhile, I was binge-watching B-tier reality TV in my pajamas. However,

**At Andover, we often justify taking on too many things, as the need to compete becomes the primary goal.**

I’ve realized I was doing some learning of my own. We often pick favorites between the contestants, sometimes based on their personality, but often due to the quality of their choices. Did they lie? Did they cheat? Did they stay true to what they said they would do initially? It’s very easy to judge those who made choices you think you would never make, until you realize that Andover’s environment is similar. I realized that I may have lost some of myself trying to keep up. It’s time for us all to stop judging our past choices and learn to adapt to this new world. Boarding schools are individual in the way they apply pressure on students, but each and every one of us is here because someone thought we belonged here, just as we were. It’s about time we start thinking we belong here, too.

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# The State of the Academy Should be Mandatory

ANDREW PARK



E. CHAI / THE PHILLIPIAN

Every year, *The Phillipian* carries out the State of the Academy, a campus-wide survey that aims to gather important demographic and comprehensive trends of our community. However, this year, due to lower completion rates, the survey was extended twice, even prompting a promise of raising Raising Canes if we were to achieve a participation turnout above 80%. Unfortunately, we were only able to reach a turnout of 76%, very similar to the turnout for last year’s SOTA, which was 74%. With 24% of non-participation this year, it is clear that the persistent apathy must be addressed, as SOTA encompasses a unique role in our community. In order to increase this participation turnout, the survey should be mandatory and administered in a manner akin to the administration-based surveys we do during advisory. By making it mandatory, we would rectify the high non-response bias that occurs when around a fourth of our campus doesn’t participate, and allow for a greater understanding of the academy’s conditions and growth.

The SOTA is *The Phillipian*’s attempt to make a public survey in which both students and faculty can understand how the community views different issues, such as politics, educa-

tion, economic class, and other important topics. Additionally, *The Phillipian* wants SOTA to show “how students are navigating academics, personal relationships, and their wellbeing”. However, a campus-wide survey only works if it actually represents the campus, and when 20-25% of the students consistently don’t respond, we lose representativeness. The numbers illustrate this problem. If we estimate that the school’s current population is around 1170, based on the 76% turnout of 889 students that did do it, 24% is 281 students who didn’t do the survey. Nearly the size of one whole grade, this is a population that would have given important information in the survey, like distinct perspectives on EBI, academic pressure, and campus culture. This is a problem, because when a quarter of our community has no voice, we risk inflating support for certain policies or missing unvoiced concerns.

A mandatory SOTA would potentially resolve multiple problems: it eliminates logistical barriers, ensures near-universal participation, and signals

**A mandatory SOTA would potentially resolve multiple problems: it eliminates logistical barriers, ensures near-universal participation, and signals that student voice matters.**

that student voice matters. Research shows that in-class survey administration dramatically increases completion rates. For example, an approach by the University of Minnesota Medi-



SOPHIA KIM / THE PHILLIPIAN

cal School made course evaluations a required institutional expectation, ultimately leading to a response rate that rose from 50% to 94% without much pushback. Of course, differences can arise between course evaluations and campus-wide surveys, but Andover can adapt this proven method for our concerns with low turnout.

Interestingly, this problem of low turnout affects not only academic environments, but also many democracies across the world. In the 2024 U.S. presidential election, the ultimate winner was neither candidate, but rather a landslide for “Did Not Vote.” Around 36% of eligible voters didn’t vote, a population so massive that, within the framework of the Electoral College, “Did Not Vote” would have earned 265 electoral college votes to Trump’s 175 and Har-

ris’s 98. In order to combat this, countries like Australia have compulsory voting and shifted elections to Saturdays. Due to these policies, Australia consistently secures turnouts upwards of 90%. While the scales and purposes of Australia’s voting system is noticeably different from ours, we can emulate a change with SOTA. If we can repeatedly get higher turnouts, our voices and collective trends would be much more faithful, just as a democracy that has more participation is more representative of the population’s wants.

One potential problem with a mandatory survey is faulty submissions. When we make the survey mandatory, students could refrain from answering genuinely, because it feels like another “useless” survey. When this happens, the sur-

vey becomes less credible as a whole and could lose its value as a trend evaluator. However, this would be easily treated with code-based cleansing if a submission is clearly an unserious submission. For example, a common phenomena of unserious survey taking is “survey straightlining,” where a high number of answers are on the same box, like “very satisfied.” If the data organizers realize that a submission crosses a certain threshold of choosing the same option, let’s say 80% of the time, the submission could be automatically flagged for further investigation. Despite the potential for unserious submissions, a theoretical 95% response rate with 5% noisy data would be much more reliable than our current state of a 76% response rate with an unknown bias. Ultimately, we’d be trading a small risk for a massive representation gain.

Andover positions itself as a community valuing student input, but allowing more than a fifth of the population to be removed from consideration undermines this ideal. The answer is having a time block, like advisory, where the survey can be administered. This would theoretically solve the low turnout and the important input from the silent population. If Andover wants a better understanding of trend development in the student body, having a sturdier foundation for SOTA is our best bet. Hopefully, the act of making it mandatory will reinforce the importance of the student voice.

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## Falls Points to Interactions with Students and Alumni as Valuable Memories of Tenure

Continued from A1, Column 3

Barbara Chase, and Barbara Timken [AA '66, Abbot Academy Fund Director], Donna Brace [Ogilvie, AA '30, established the Brace Center for Gender Studies in 1996], Mollie Lasater [AA '56, Trustee Emerita], who just passed away. There have been a lot of women, Betsy Powell ['56, P'84, '90, GP'19, Trustee Emerita], who have kept the presence, the voice, the traditions of Abbot," said Falls.

Reflecting on her time as Board President, Falls said her interactions with students, alumni, and parents were among the most valuable parts of the role, reminding her of the purpose behind the Board's work. During her tenure, Andover also completed several campus renewal projects, which Falls remarked on.

"I have also felt very excited by the campus renewal projects that we've done, to see students really occupying those spaces, athletics sites, the library, the music center. I think that whole wave of capital projects was really about common skill-based spaces or need-based spaces, which is good," said Falls.

Falls also pointed to governance as a focus of her presidency, including the addition of three Board committees, the creation of an executive committee, and the establishment of a Vice President position, which Christopher Auguste '76, P'09, '12, will assume on July 1. Although the Vice President position had been created in principle, Falls explained that the Board waited to fill it until the leadership transition to avoid appearing to influence the selection of the next Board President.

"In my first few years, I looked at the committee structure, and I added three committees. One is the education committee; there had been one that had been disbanded. And then I added one for collections to represent the museums. And then the outreach programs where we folded the [Tang Institute] into that. So those were three brand new committees, taking the total number of committees from six to nine. The

Board Chair really should go to all those committees' meetings, and I found that I couldn't really legitimately go to all of them. [So] we also created an executive committee, which we hadn't had prior to that. If there's an emergency or something serious, you don't have to get all [the Trustees] on the phone. You can go to your executive committee," said Falls.

Reflecting on Falls's tenure, Zinterhofer emphasized Falls's leadership, institutional knowledge, and experience across multiple roles at Andover.

"I have learned a great deal watching Amy lead and serve Andover over these last several years. She is an incredibly collaborative and deeply knowledgeable board president. Not only does she have the financial savvy and strategic skills required to distill the school's complex operations, she has a unique ability to engage with and synthesize a range of voices and opinions. Contributing to Amy's effectiveness is her vast institutional knowledge, accumulated over many years and beginning soon after graduation. She is a long-serving volunteer and philanthropist. She has seen Andover from the perspective of an alumna, a parent, a campaign chair, and a trustee, among other roles... Amy's vision and steady hand have led the school through prosperous, rewarding, and challenging times," wrote Zinterhofer in an email to *The Phillipian*.

As she looks toward the next chapter of leadership, Falls identified residential life, adapting with technological change, and student well-being as areas the Board will continue to address.

"I think we need to improve our housing stock. I think that's new dorms, I think that's rethinking the structure. I'm proud of what we did on the first wave, but I know we have other stuff to do, and that's very important. The second big thing is that the shifts in technology are tectonic... I think that Andover always has to figure out how to prepare our students to take the leadership roles that they can... The third thing is making sure that joy and well-being are continu-

ally reinforced. All these changes and the drive towards excellence are important values. But it's also important to have joy in your life and artistic expression for the sake of it," said Falls.

Falls also reflected on personal memories from her time as a student, parent, and trustee, pointing to spring on campus, watching her daughters graduate, and the opening of the Falls Music Center.

"My favorite memories from Andover [as a student] are very much this time, when it's finally spring, and just being on the lawn. I was lucky to be here for the big birthday of the Addison [Gallery of American Art]. To celebrate it, they had guys on stilts and music out on the lawn," said Falls. "I loved watching my two daughters graduate."

Falls continued, "I was very close to my dad when I lost him in August, and he loved music. And I always say that, for me, the Falls Music Center was really in his honor. And going to that opening, even though he couldn't be there because he was still alive, but he was fading, but he was watching on Zoom. And I went home, and I gave him the little music box. That meant a lot to me, to have that moment and know that he knew it happened," said Falls.

Falls emphasized the importance of allowing new leadership to step forward.

"I'm going to miss these meetings a lot. But I promised I wouldn't be the ghost of Christmas Past. You've got to know when you're over. I had my turn," said Falls.

## Students Share Interactions with Olusola During Visit

Continued from A1, Column 5

Bernard and Mildred Kayden Fund and William Thomas Visiting Artist Fund. Cirelli explained how his suggestion to invite Olusola stemmed from appreciation for his character.

"He was always one of my favorite students to work with, and he's such a positive person. First of all, he's a great musician, which was the main reason that we brought him here. But he's also just such a good person. He really wants others to flourish and to have a good life as well. He's that type of person who wants the best for others," said Cirelli.

Olusola elaborated on his connection to the fund's namesake, William Thomas, who served as Director of Performance during his time at Andover. Olusola reflected on how Thomas supported him in pursuing his goals.

"He was my cello and orchestra teacher here, and in so many ways, we were the same person. He was Black, I'm Black. He loved food, I love food. He was from Kentucky, I'm from Kentucky. He played cello, I played cello. He loved classical music, I love classical music," said Olusola.

Olusola continued, "He was somewhat of an older brother-slash-father figure to me while I was here because I sometimes felt crazy being one of the only people who looked like me playing cello and loving classical music. He made me feel sane. He made me feel like I could do anything. He made me feel like I mattered. Because of that, he gave me a lot of confidence when I eventually made the switch into music, knowing that the things he taught and instilled in me meant I had something to offer the world."

Before and after his speech, Olusola attended and met with different student groups like Fidelio Society, the Academy Chamber Orchestra, and the student band Goose&Moose. Claire Wang '26, who introduced Olusola, explained how the band got Olusola to perform at the Den Show.

"During orchestra rehearsal, something came over me, and I said, 'Kevin Olusola, we have to have a dance battle.' I am not really sure why I said that. We tried a dance battle, and he realized I am not very good at dancing, so he told me to go back to the orchestra and play my instru-

ment instead," said Wang.

She continued, "I think that put me on his radar. Afterwards, I was talking to my friend Ethan Liu [26], who is also in Goose&Moose, about whether we should ask him to perform with us. Kevin overheard us and said, 'If you have a question, you can ask me.' He said it playfully. We asked if he wanted to perform with Goose&Moose, and he immediately said yes."

Reflecting on the ASM, Darian Reyes '28 explained how he resonated with Olusola's journey of discovering his passion for music.

"My parents wanted [me] to be a mathematician, like a video game engineer since I used to be into video games and just in general, I was very tech savvy as a kid. Then I decided that really wasn't for me. Not too long ago, this was freshman Winter Term, I discovered my love for music and stuff. Shortly after discovering that, that's kind of where I've laid my future. Him talking about his experience reminded me of my own experiences as well," said Reyes.

Ian Gu '26 shared similar sentiments, explaining how Olusola's decision to listen to himself inspired him to stay open to opportunity.

"I was thinking about his life story. He was from an immigrant family, and his parents expected him to become a doctor, he was pursuing his premed path at Yale. Suddenly, one day, he just decided to switch to music and join all these different groups. That story was very inspiring to me because it leaves me to think about how I'm not stuck on one path of life. If there are ever any cool opportunities that I can take, Kevin's story has really inspired me to be open to those because you never know where that one decision might lead, and it could change your whole life," said Gu.

Papa Paintsil '26, who introduced Olusola at ASM, shared how he hopes that Andover will continue to bring speakers who share Olusola's presence and attributes.

"I hope the fund continues bringing in performers who genuinely care about students and care deeply about their craft. In the video Kevin Olusola showed during ASM, you could tell how passionate he is about what he does. It's really valuable for students to see artists who truly love their work because it can inspire students to discover their own passions as well," said Paintsil.

## Students and Faculty Share Opinions on AI's Future Role in Academic Settings

Continued from A1, Column 5

strongly about, because it is going to be a skill, much like using email and navigating the internet was when I started going into the workforce... [Creating] students who are AI-literate, who are using it to support their learning but not replace the process of learning," said Faulk.

Nick Zufelt, Instructor in Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science, described his approach to AI and how it varies between his math and computer science courses.

"In my math classes, I would say that AI is available, but it's not really talked too much about. I told students that they can go ahead and use Khanmigo, [or] they can also use something like ChatGPT. Obviously not on a test. That's where the vast majority of the grade comes from in my math class, so that's why I feel relatively comfortable allowing students to use it. I'm going to start incorporating a little bit more AI by showing these students how I would tackle math problems using AI. That's probably coming at a later stage," said Zufelt.

Zufelt continued, "In my computer science classes, we use AI a ton. There are certain [tasks] that I'm comfortable with students allowing AI to perform. For example, it could be the case that AI

is used to do research on some computer science concept. So maybe you are writing the code to have a character move across the screen in a game. You can do research on the side and have AI explain to you how something works. I think a lot of people, especially a lot of teachers, worry about what we would call hallucination, or confabulation, where AI just makes up stuff that's not true. The cool thing about computer science is you can just run that code and test with your own eyes if it's working or not. So that's why I feel relatively comfortable in computer science, allowing AI use, as long as students are being responsible with it."

Keri Lambert, Chair in History and Social Science, shared that humanities instructors have used AI-powered tools to better understand their potential. She expressed her hopes for AI literacy to complement integration in the future.

"If instructors use AI at all for work, it's mostly to understand the tools better. For instance, some instructors have tried to learn how ChatGPT analyzes historical evidence, how Gemini produces research notes, or how Claude organizes historical arguments... In the next couple of years, I hope History can collaborate with the other Humanities departments to figure out how to promote better AI literacy so that students can more critically evaluate AI tools as

well as the content they generate," wrote Lambert in an email to *The Phillipian*.

Within the department, AI usage has varied among instructors. Eric Denby, Instructor in History, explained how AI has enabled him to expand his creative range in the classroom.

"I have found AI useful in creating historical simulations that I use during group activities. While it doesn't necessarily lessen time, as I double check all of the information for accuracy, it does allow me to explore different ways to make history come alive in my classroom. As far as workflow, it has not reduced much time in lesson plan, though it has become a nice brainstorming partner," wrote Denby in an email to *The Phillipian*.

Lambert also expressed reservations about Khanmigo, an AI tutoring tool that Andover piloted this Spring Term.

"The Khanmigo writing tutor tool did not offer helpful advice in the demo that I saw; in fact, it affirmed really poor writing, so I worry it could mislead our students... [We're] trying to help students learn how to think, whereas I worry Khanmigo incorrectly implies History as a discipline is more in the business of teaching students what to think," wrote Lambert.

Many students have noticed these shifts in usage and enforcement firsthand. Nafi Diagne '26 shared her observations of cultural attitudes towards

AI during her years at Andover.

"Before my Lower year, nobody really knew what it was. Before my Upper year, no one knew what it was. I heard the word ChatGPT three times. Upper year, all [of a] sudden it was this huge thing. The teachers, especially in the History Department this year at least, have talked a lot about how checking for AI infringements... has taken so much time, and they shifted from absolutely not using it at all to giving you guidelines around it, just because they knew students were using it a lot... They started doing, in my English 300 [class], no out-of-class essays, whereas in my earlier years, all my essays were out of class," said Diagne.

Kami Zheng '27 explained how AI integration has varied greatly across her classes, particularly in her teachers' viewpoints.

"My past English teacher, I feel like he felt personally attacked by AI. I understand that because it's an insult to [teachers'] work. Some teachers are so against it that they refuse to interact with it at all. And then there's some teachers that don't enforce anything about AI. For my teachers, I've definitely seen some of them become more strict with it, but not necessarily let us use it more," said Zheng.

Felisha Li '28 noted a similar increase in enforcement around AI. She highlighted the different usages of AI and their

varying implications, citing an example from her history class.

"I've noticed a lot more in-class essays in the English, History, and Rel-Phil departments," said Li. "[Finding sources using AI is] okay in certain cases. For example, in my history manifesto project, our teacher let us use some AI to look at manifestos because it's a gigantic database over thousands of manifestos. So it lightens the workload over something that's tedious and doesn't help you learn."

Frank Hu '26, who has begun using AI tools more frequently for his academic work, said he sees AI as a technological shift Andover will need to adapt to.

"For academic institutions, it's a lot easier to do well and it's a lot easier to do more. So it's an arms race of who can use it the best in order to maximize their time... because the expectations change based on the tools that you have. I assume that research was a lot more difficult when the internet wasn't around and in the same way, putting out a high volume of work was harder when we didn't have AI. It's neither good nor bad. It's just different, and we still have to wait and see how this changes the landscape of a school," said Hu.

# 10 Questions with Marcelle Doheny

REPORTING BY JUDY LIU & SOPHIA TOLOKH

*Originally from England, Marcelle Doheny has been a teacher in the History Department for 34 years. She has a particular passion for teaching electives that examine how gender impacted power dynamics in Tudor England. She also has a strong interest in interdisciplinary courses, co-teaching a senior elective that explores how climate change has shaped history. In her free time, Doheny loves to read mystery novels and getting outside to exercise.*



CINDY ZHOU/THE PHILLIPIAN

**How did your passion for history develop? Were there any early experiences, people, or stories that first sparked your curiosity?**

For me, it is about a sense of place. Where I grew up, the countryside there is very neolithic. There's a lot of ancient earthworks and burial mounds and features in the country and the landscape. You're just walking on history. And my dad was a huge walker, we were always out and about. And so for me, history is always about a sense of the physical place. I think that comes from the fact that I walked all over that particular area where I grew up. Then that developed into a sense of place in terms of buildings.

**What made you decide to move from England to America?**

I had a bit of an international upbringing, because my mom is not English, but from Belgium. As a kid, I was always going across the channel to the continent, as we call it in England, to visit relatives. There were also multiple languages in my house growing up. I think I always felt international to some extent, and I always had a bit of that itch to go work somewhere else. So I came here in my mid-20s. I didn't know I was going to stay, but that's just the way it worked out.

**What is one cultural shock you experienced after moving here?**

I remember going to grocery stores, because it's something you tend to do every day. I was really surprised because apart from the person checking you out, there was also someone packing the groceries for you with the bags. That was not my experience growing up. I remember thinking how interesting it was that someone packs the groceries for you, and then puts them into paper bags. When I came to this country, they would give you paper bags that didn't have handles. So I remember thinking 'well, what use is that?' It's the silliest thing, but it really struck me. In England, we would just go grocery shopping, and you pack your own groceries in bags that you bring yourself after it comes down the line.

**As an Andover faculty member for 34 years, what are some of the biggest shifts you've observed in our community culture from then to now?**

This is a really interesting place. It's a bit like history. There's as much continuity as there is change. Students still hang on to certain fables or myths about being a student

here, like how dreadful the 300 paper is, and [other] things like that. [As for] student culture, students have changed because how we get information has changed. It's really the advent of all the online mediums that are making things harder, [especially] for someone of my age and background where everything was words on paper. So, I've changed too. I can't teach now without technology, and that shift sort of happens in dribs and drabs, until suddenly you realize [that] ten years ago you weren't doing this. It sort of creeps up on you. Adult culture has also changed a lot. When I came, the history department was [composed] mostly of male alumni. And I'm not saying that's a bad thing, it was just a function of the early 1990s. So the faculty composition has changed a lot since [I joined]. Now, in the History department, we have people from many different backgrounds in terms of their training and global histories, including the Middle East, Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia.

**As a former course head for History 100, how have you seen the curriculum evolve since the early 90s?**

When I came, it was a very different ninth grade course. We're about to rewrite the ninth grade again this summer. That's my fourth go-around. It mostly changes in terms of time periods that we choose to cover. We change our priorities with what we

think would be most beneficial for students. I think students read less written words than they used to, and that's just a fact. It's not a judgment on students' ability levels or anything like that. It's just the world that students live in. So we've changed courses to work with that. We've also changed the way we teach writing. We're much more intentional today about supporting students through the process of writing, [which means] working with students, scaffolding assignments, giving them time to do the work. When I came in the early 90s, that sink or swim ethos was sort of going away, but it was still more like that than it is now, so that's a progression.

**What are some electives you've taught that you've enjoyed?**

I've liked them all for very different reasons. I did one with a music teacher here a few years ago, because I'm very fond of music. I don't have a favorite. They all do different things for me because I have lots of interests. I'm not really a specialist. I have lots of different things that I get interested in, and that's actually why being able to write these electives is so compelling for me. I can spontaneously learn about things in order to teach them. That's what I love doing. It's great that Andover lets faculty do that as well. It keeps the classrooms alive for students as well. We're very,

very lucky as teachers here to be able to feed our own interests in that way and have it be encouraged. It's wonderful.

**What was your inspiration for teaching your electives, Gender and Power in Tudor England and How Climate Change Wrote History?**

[My inspirations were] very different. The gender and power one is set in 16th century England, which was my first love as a kid. For some reason I just got hooked on that [time period] when I was about eleven years old. There were a couple of period pieces on TV, and I just loved it. I think it's because the characters were larger than life, and there was a lot of drama in it. And for me, history is also about the individuals. I mean, if it's not about people, what is it about? As a kid, I certainly got interested in [the history of] dramatic people who had dramatic lives. [Meanwhile], the climate [course] was very different. I worked with Dr. Hagler in the Biology Department. We had done a previous elective together about the history of disease and medicine in the United States for a number of years. Then, at least ten years ago, we just sat and thought about mixing it up. At that time, all the stuff was coming about climate change and we thought to ourselves that there's no way the Earth has been static in history. [Our plan was to] educate about how climate, weather, and

non-human things have had a real impact on human history. I love doing interdisciplinary stuff like this because you can't do some subjects without working with others. And history could be about everything, right? Anything and everything. With the [topic of] climate change in the past, you need science to go with the history. And Dr. Hagler can explain certain things in class that I can't. So, we try to put it together [through] collaboration.

**You mentioned your interest in specifically Native American history. Why is it a personal area of focus in your teaching?**

I have taught a senior elective on indigenous civil rights a couple of times, and I will do it again. We rotate them somewhat, so we don't do the same ones every year. My inspiration is that sense of place again. Like, when I go to the countryside in New England, a lot more about the indigenous presence that used to be there. Landscape to me is about people's pasts, so here, that [translates] to a focus on indigenous presence.

**What do you like to do in your free time?**

I don't have as many hobbies. Once I had kids, I didn't have as many hobbies. I do love music and traveling. [But], I don't have things I make and do like I used to in the evenings. [Although], I will probably go back to something or find something new once I retire. You'll find out that [having kids] limits you. You're either running the dorm or spending time with them, so you can't do as many things. [Still], I love reading, [specifically] mystery novels. I'm a bit of a detective fiction mystery novel buff. I also love exercising, going to the gym, and just getting outside. I used to play in orchestras a lot. I just found that very difficult to do when I was in the dorm. I used to play oboe, which I probably should go back to at some point.

**What sports have you played?**

I used to play a lot of sports, especially team sports. A lot of field hockey, a lot of badminton. I used to do a lot of evening sports, less so when I came to the United States. There's less amateur sports for women once they've gone into the workforce. It's different here. England's full of amateurs. The British are completely in love with being amateurs at something. They love their hobbies. I feel like the community there is very different, because it feels very connected. Even though I'm not obviously part of those clubs in England, I could just walk in and be like 'oh, do you want to play a match?' I like that culture.

## Finalists Present Original Works at Annual Means Essay Declamation

**JUNIPER KLOCK & HELEN XIONG**

Alex Lin '28, Jeannie Kang '28, and Bruce Ru '28 declaimed their essays in Kemper Auditorium last Friday, reflecting on their identity, meaningful experiences, and lessons learned. The three students are this year's nominees for the Means Essay Prize, an award from the English Department founded in 1868 to celebrate student talent and encourage literary engagement.

Kang's essay, "The Guardian," was declared the winner of the prize following the reading. In her essay, Kang weaves her recollection of a recent car crash with memories from her childhood, a narrative that explores emotions and vulnerability. Kang discussed the inspiration behind her work and the process of developing her final essay.

"I have something called 'Jeannie Weekly' where I publish a story about my life every week and send it to an email list. I wrote about the car crash, and I thought that it's an interesting essay. So, I decided to think and expand beyond that. The greatest lesson I got from that car crash was about my relationship with my mom and grandma and how anyone can be weak and be strong at a given point in their lives," said Kang.

Attendee Celine Lee '28 noted the creative choices that enhanced Kang's speech. "When Jeannie was talking

about the car incident, it tied very closely to something that happened to me this year. The raw and brutal honesty was very touching and emotional to hear... I also love Jeannie's, 'put the hat on, take the hat off.' I thought that was very fun and dynamic," said Lee.

Lin's piece, "Stargazing in the Graveyard," recounted her experience stargazing in the Chapel Cemetery and her quiet moments reflecting about death. Lin explained why she traveled to the cemetery and what she wished listeners to take away from her essay.

"In the fall, I stargazed a lot because a lot of my friends took [Astronomy]. Because it's really hard to find a dark spot on campus, we were like, 'Hey, what's the one place that's not the middle of the sanctuary that doesn't have any lights on campus?' And it was the graveyard. So, I started going there pretty often at night to look at stars," said Lin.

She continued, "My essay is a little bit existential. It's about life and death, what would happen after we died, whether or not that really matters, and how that affects how I view being alive. I want people to take more notice of how beautiful the world is around them because they won't have it for very long."

As a writer, Ellaine Ban '28 highlighted Lin's essay and expressed admiration for all finalists' unique writing styles.

"For Alex's essay, the descriptive capabilities and her writing itself really stuck with me. She described the constellations in one section of her

essay really well and in such a beautiful way. I remember being really in awe of how admirably and beautifully she described them...[The writers] allowed their unique creative voices to shine through there. It was a good experience for me to listen to other writers and also gain inspiration from them," said Ban.

Ru's piece, "Wahroonga Ballad," is a story about making home no matter where you are and about understanding where we have been in order to shape who we will become. He shared his mother's tradition of planting bok choy in each new home they moved to, and how it became a symbol of these values.

"I have a very multicultural life story. I have a Chinese background, and we immigrated to Australia. This has always been a very unique aspect of my identity that I wanted to explore. I decided to take this in an interpretive direction, so I wrote about our vegetable garden. I talked about how no matter where we moved, my mother would always grow bok choy pats whenever we moved for school or immigrating. Eventually, I wrote about much more than just that vegetable garden," said Ru.

He continued, "I think the main message is that whenever you are in a new place or you feel like you want to belong, there's always a very long context of past, either past traumas, opportunities, changes that shaped the place that you are in. I wanted to have the reader understand



COURTESY OF CELINE LEE  
Jeannie Kang '28 (left), Alex Lin '28 (middle), and Bruce Ru '28 (right) were the 2026 Means Essay finalists.

that issues like racism and colonialism aren't the fault of one person. It's a climate that has developed over time, and there's lots of historical forces."

Ayden McDonald '28 recalled being one of the first to read Ru's essay in their shared English class. The themes of Ru's essay resonated deeply with McDonald, who praised its complexity and nuance.

"I had the privilege of having Bruce in my English class. I'd actually been able to see the essay, at least in its pre-edited form. Even then, I still remember how empowering and inspiring it was. It deals with a very complicated subject of identity and immigration in a settler colonial state in a very personal and humanizing way. It was one of the

best works in terms of how it dealt with such a complicated subject," said McDonald.

Teaching Fellow in English Isaac Gittleman served as a judge for the Means Essay Prize. He recalled his experience as an aspiring writer in high school, emphasizing the prize as a valuable opportunity and platform.

"When I was in high school, there weren't really opportunities to do creative writing very much, and there certainly weren't opportunities celebrated by the school to reward students for putting extra effort outside of class on their craft. So, [the Means Essay Prize] is a really amazing opportunity to highlight and reward students for all the amazing creative work that they do," said Gittleman.

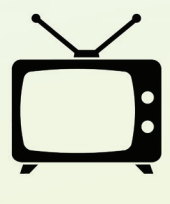
## HISTORY 300 PAPER TOPICS

**MUREWA BIYI-OLAJOYE '27**



"My topic is the Tuskegee syphilis study and its impact on the US healthcare system... I wanted to talk about marginalized communities [that] were not treated well. The paper is so much work, but you're learning about something you're interested in, and I definitely feel like I learned it all."

**SAANIKA SLOTWINER '27**



"[My paper] is on how television impacted American public opinion [during] the Tet Offensive... Television itself didn't actually end up changing opinion that much, which is what popular belief is, but it was more like a catalyst in people understanding what they thought about the war."

**JASJIT HARGUN '27**



"My paper is on Philippine independence and why it took all the way until 1946 to happen. I looked into what the motivations were in both the Philippines and the U.S. for keeping the islands. Choose a topic that gets you excited because your paper is only going to be good if you have the motivation to actually research and really dive into those topics."

**ZOË GILBERTSON '27**



"I wrote about the music of the counterculture movement in the 1960s and 70s [and] how Bob Dylan electrified folk music and how that expanded... the hippie audience to this new genre of rock and roll that was deeply politicized. In that repopularization of rock music... came this new era of psychedelic rock."

**OWEN HUANG '27**



"My topic is the SR-71 Blackbird... It's an example from the past of how paranoia and fear can drive government spending and how that can happen to act on the world stage, especially as the U.S. and China potentially are entering a more tense environment."

**SHILOH ROBINSON '27**



"I wrote about the Roanoke colony... [When the governor] came back after three years, the whole colony disappeared. What I believe is that assimilation with the local native tribes was likely the reason."

REPORTING BY JUNIPER KLOCK & HELEN XIONG

AGLAIA HONG/THE PHILLIPIAN

## OWHL Hosts Third Biennial Abbot Book Festival

**KAI OBATA & DINA NAMJOO**

This Spring Term's biennial Abbot Book Festival, centering the theme "Anatomy of a Book," featured publishing panels, zine workshops, free books, student performances, and activities. Hosted by the Oliver Wendell Holmes Library (OWHL) and its Student Advisory Committee, and with generous funding from the Abbot Academy Fund, the festival aimed to bring the Andover community together to explore the many ways literature is created, shared and experienced.

Anastasia Collins, Instructional Librarian and Geographer at Large, explained that the Abbot Book Festival was envisioned as an opportunity to bring the campus community together for the purpose of celebrating reading and access to lit-

erature, a space librarians felt was previously missing on campus. According to Collins, the idea for the festival emerged several years ago when they and Instructional Librarian M. Wallis discovered the existence of the Abbot Academy Grants.

"Three years ago, M. Wallis and I were just sitting. We were new to [Andover], and we had just learned that Abbot Academy Grants existed, and were not only open to students, though also members of faculty. So we began to wonder if there's ever been a book festival here. There's a lot of things [Andover] is known for, but there's also just some things that have never really happened here...The [Abbot Book Festival] is a little mini little version of the Boston Book Festival, an opportunity to just come together and celebrate reading and access," said Collins.

Wallis highlighted the

significance of the event as a space for students to step outside their academic lives and explore their creative identities. They noted that the festival offered students a chance to share their work while discovering new interests in areas like publishing.

"It's a really unique time for folks to come together and really get away from curriculum and think about other aspects of reading, writing, and creating. There are a ton of really creative people on this campus, including one student, Kristen Ma [27], who's going to be talking about her poetry collection, which she published a couple months ago. [It's] an opportunity for people to engage in the way of telling other people what they've done, and also for people to come in and find out new things that they're interested in around book-making, maybe they've thought about publishing. It creates a little network

of opportunities," said Wallis.

Collins noted that community can be built through shared experiences of literature, and emphasized the Abbot Book Festival's accessibility.

"You don't need to necessarily consider yourself a big reader. It is just the idea that books are a way for people to share ideas, reading them and engaging with them however you want.

You can hate a book. That's totally fine. Write your opinions on it, engage and talk and create more things in response to things being created, is the idea," said Collins.

Ellah Kotlarsky '27, a member of the OWHL Student Advisory Board, expressed her hope that the festival would help foster a culture of reading outside of academic work. Conversations surrounding the challenges and rewards of publishing and writing further placed an empha-

sis on the importance of student engagement with literature.

"We talked about the goods and bads of publishing in the panel and ups and downs of being a writer at a place like Andover where it's so busy. But it's really important to do things like the Abbot Book Festival, and focusing on the positives and how by being at Andover, books, they kind of connect us," said Kotlarsky.

Wallis expressed hope that the festival would leave students with an inspiration to engage with literature in any way that suits them.

"I hope students will be inspired in some way, to create, however that might look, and to know that there's new opportunities out there. Maybe they have new ideas about things that they're already doing. Maybe they join a new club based on the clubs that are tabled in at the festival," said Wallis.



### David O'Neill & Sarah Powers

Get Neicia's approval X

Rating: Hours David spent crying over Sarah / the width of the ice David is on

### Philip Meng & Sophie Liang

Sigmund Freud would love this relationship (lowk Oedipus complex @theofficialnateliang)

Rating: # of LinkedIn connections

### Francesca Dizon & Sean Griggs

By some miracle

Rating: Magnitude of swag gap

### Caroline Averill & Will Ware

This is the closest Will can get to Heated Rivalry

Rating: Marginally better than Andover Affirmations

### Mojmir Horvath & Izzy Park

Adoptive father-daughter dinner dance

Rating: Auditory Data Izzy has contributed to Mojmir's LLMs measured in words per Minute

### Cade Rutkoske & Sarah Bae

BKH incest

Rating: # of predecessors

### Micheal Kawooya & Hluma Mangcu

Sharpay and Ryan in the 2026 Woke Netflix rerun

Rating: Disney Channel

### David Frahm & Sophia Lazar

Siblings or dating

Rating: # of sightings in Elson catacombs

### Amina Gorman & Chris Fu

Amina's all about that bass

Rating: # of body rolls CFU bear will hit at Prom/100

### Gracie Aziabor & Rohan Agrawal

Will definitely be on the front page of the PA Instagram post

Rating: Number of people who got a \$5 Den gift card on their birthday

### Zoe von Eckartsberg & Jacob Gourley

They are family! Get up everybody and sing!

Rating: RP's NHL prospects

### Kate Rodgers & Zachary Fedele

What happens in the bathtub stays in the bathtub

Rating: Hours spent apart /10

### Josie Sarno & Ashiq Kibria

The jokes write themselves

Rating: # of kisses Ashiq will give Josie

### Piper Lasater & Bennett Rodgers

Is my best friend's brother the one for me?

Rating: Chances Ayush will join in/1

### Jonathan Bu & Sean Pao

Both couldn't get dates

Rating: Red zone on the gaydar

# PRAHM Roasts

### Matt Saleh & Anastasia Paul

Did he agree to the open relationship?

Rating: \$ Anastasia had to pay to go to prom with him/1000

### Quiana Bell & Bailey Jean-Pierre

Rumor has it Q only agreed so she could be an ad lib on RTK's next single, "Tik Tok on my C\*\*k" (Inspired by the hit Kesha Song)

Rating: # of spotify monthly listeners

### Rowan Leckerling & Tina Phan

Only sent to breathalyze her for Big Leck "Ay Pops, EL WIRO"

Rating: Days left on the ankle monitor

### Mercan Draman & Noah Pare

Goodbye wholesome small town boy

Rating: R

### Ayush Gupta & Prisha Shivani

No roast, show em what those dogs can do Ayush!

Rating: How many Zimbabwean dollars Ayush paid her to go with him

### Anny Wang & David Song

Rumor has it, Anny will be continuing to collect Class Rep signatures at Prom

Rating: # of times an innocent child has been forced to third wheel in Silent

### Frank Hu & Becky Koleth

She say she a lesbian, for F she turn Fesbian

Rating: # of corsets in shared closet

### Ruby Kokinos & Owen Callahan

Marek and Emerson before it went south

Rating: | Days Together - Days Apart | / Total days

### George Elliott & Caroline Young

Blinked twice to accept promposal

Rating: # of words spoken /10

### Sophia Tabibian & Corey Shen

Will show up to prom in an EV

Rating: combined MMR of B2B SaaS

### Drew Wasylyshyn & Sarah Katib

Spit siblings?

Rating: Andover, MA connected

### Grayson Flynn & Anna Tsvetkov

She left her boy in house arrest for a real man

Rating: Eyebrows divided by eyebrows

### Jayda Lu & Ishaan Padmawar

Will prob start a grind circle at Prom

Rating: Money spent on Jayda's cosplay

### James Gordon & Sydney Jan

Sponsored by the TikTok creator fund

Rating: # of views on TikTok/100 million

### Wylie Pottle & Ainsley Muldoon

The relationship Samuel Phillips imagined when he built these halls

Rating: Rumors produced/1000



### Lucy Parker & Joe Doyle

Take her to Israel for the honeymoon

Rating: Crisis management ("Good boy Joe!" -Peter Thiel)

### Dean Burton & Lilly Stephenson

The question is, can Dean handle the wrath of Loomis's newest 5 star football recruit?

Rating: Tommy's age - Dean's Age (approx 3)

### Dylan Anzel & Riya Patel

Different views of swastika

Rating: # of people who leave the Den after Dylan starts DJ-ing/1000

### Matt Shampine & Angelina Vincent

Will be filming EVERYTHING with his Meta glasses

Rating: Combined Social IQ/10

### Lilly Hall & Sean Kim

Might even hold hands on the dance floor

Rating: Broke the scale, cuteness overload!

### Ethan Liu & Claire Wang

Red Panda Express

Rating: Percent increase of Ethan's rizz while playing saxophone

### Nick Kramer & Isabella Mazzi

How do you say "how the f\*\*\*" in Portuguese

Rating: Nick's Global Valorant Ranking/5

### Tyler Miocevich & Maya Swanson

Took her to the O(ntario greater area)

Rating: # of shoe inserts needed/10

### Michael Huang & Maggie Mercado

Cluster President and Monica Lewinsky

Rating: # of deep dives taken

### Emiliano Bobadilla & Nneka Ezeike

Jabari could dunk on Emiliano. Fact.

Rating: PG

### Ollie Velez & Maren Boyle

From one bird to another (Cacaw, roll eags)

Rating: | Football wins - Field Hockey wins |

### Louis Felix-Beaulieu & Caroline Romano

There's no language barrier on the dance floor ;)

Rating: Feet tall/ 5

### Tristan Furlow & Wylie Roossien

Athlete-student and just athlete

Rating: Tristan's GPA

### Kele Gregory & Lilly McInerney

May this type of love attack me

Rating: Combined deadlift in lbs/1000

### Alyssa Schoonmaker & James Bae

She finally decided to put the Asian in Wasian

Rating: # of concealer bottles used



# The Phillipian SPORTS

cheers!

Volume CXLIX | Number 14

May 22, 2026

## Softball Captures Second Consecutive Big East Title, Defeats Brooks

ALEX GODSEY

SATURDAY 5/16	
Andover	11
Exeter	1
SATURDAY 5/16	
Andover	10
Lawrence	1
SATURDAY 5/16	
Andover	5
St. Paul's	2
WEDNESDAY 5/20	
Andover	10
Brooks	0

Softball (21-0) capped off a dominant season by capturing the Big East Tournament title, having already won it last season, and extending its winning streak. Andover opened the tournament defeating Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) and routing Lawrence Academy (Lawrence). In the championship match versus St. Paul's, Softball overcame an early deficit to claim the victory. Audrey Gotha '28 — the tournament's most valuable player — pitcher Ashley Schuman '27, and Co-Captain Rihana Gomez '26 were hon-

ored as part of the All-Tournament Team. Wednesday, the team defeated Brooks in a shutout.

Against Exeter, Victoria MacKenzie '28 powered the offense with two home runs, while Gaby Potter '27 added a three-run home run to extend the lead. In the second matchup against Lawrence, Schuman anchored the defense with eight strikes in three no-hit innings. Assistant Coach Karen Douyon described key moments during Mackenzie's standout performance against Exeter.

"For Victoria's first homerun, the count was full, three balls and two strikes. This means you have to be very strategic at the plate and smart with your swings. You have to really protect. Maddie Marshall [29] and Sydney Moore [28] were on base, and Victoria had a great swing, to have a three run homerun. Then for the second one, she hit off the first pitch. As I was watching the swing, as soon as she hit it, I just knew it was over the fence. It was gone," said Douyon.

Heading into Sunday's championship matchup, Softball knew it would be a challenge after an early season meeting ended with a narrow 1-0 victory, its smallest margin of victory this season. Andover struggled in the first two innings, going hitless and finding itself down 0-2 early on. But in the third inning, Marshall sparked the comeback with a simple base hit that got the offense flowing. From that point on, the team rallied for five runs to finish the game and secure the championship title. MacKenzie described the crucial moment that ignited the winning run.

"Maddie had two balls on the count, so she was really looking for a pitch that she wanted to drive. When that ball came, she hit a ground ball up the middle, and it was a great hit. It really got every-



COURTESY OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY

Members of Girls Softball celebrate their Big East victory against St. Paul's.

thing started. And even though it definitely wasn't her best hit, it got her on [base], got our momentum going," said MacKenzie.

MacKenzie continued, "After Maddie got that first hit, our energy just started skyrocketing. Our momentum was just built off of that. We all started hitting the ball. We started getting on base, having productive at bats. Even if we got out, myself personally, I had a deep pop out, sacrifice fly, so I drove in a run, even though I got out, which was still a productive at bat. But we were getting on base somehow, finding ways to get on, whatever we could do."

On Wednesday against Brooks, Softball started slow before a walk shifted the momentum. What started as a 1-0 game through the first four innings quickly turned into a 10-0 victory as Andover gained momentum from a seemingly insignificant walk. Sierra

Lee '28 described the walk that served as a turning point during the game.

"We just didn't explode in the beginning like we should have, and it was actually a really close game for the majority of the game. And then one inning, we finally dialed in our focus and we scored six runs and then we ended up winning 10-0. We just started off slow, we weren't focused. It was just a walk that got us started, those are the kind of things that unexpectedly can be able to start a rally. So the walk was followed by a hit and then we were gifted a couple errors by the other team. From that point on, we were really able to explode," said Lee.

Softball posted an undefeated 21-0 record and defended its title as Big East champions. Its success has been fueled by months of hard work and commitment. Coach Douyon emphasized the team's

dedication and high standards as the foundation of this season's success.

"I live right next to the softball field, and I see Audrey, Maddie, and Sarah[-Alyse Williams '28] out on the field. Even if it's raining, they still show up. That level of dedication is really important. And then even on the weekends, when school's not even in session, Victoria is still out there. There's just a certain level of performance that our team brings and a certain high expectation that every girl has of themselves. That's what brings us together to create such an amazing team that is unstoppable. Everybody wants to beat, but nobody can," said Douyon.

Girls Softball will play Exeter on Senior night this Saturday for its final game of the season.

## Girls Tennis Ends the Season Strong: Victories at NEPSAC Championships and Against Exeter

BEN KAZLOUSKI

Girls Tennis (14-0) took home the trophy from the NEPSAC Championships on Sunday. The team won the event in 2024. It picked up its ninth sweep of the season in the semi-finals on Saturday, beating Groton 5-0. Following a commanding victory, the team subsequently matched up against Hotchkiss in the finals, winning with a 5-1 victory against Hotchkiss. However, the season still had more to offer with a victory against Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) on Wednesday, where it won 8-1.

Co-Captain Evelyn Kung '26 and Lara Madan '27 employed poaching — moving to the center of the court to hit a ball in the air before it travels to their partner — in their doubles match against Hotchkiss in the championship. Kung noted how she was proud of the duo's execution.

"I want to shout out my doubles partner, Lara, and also myself, because we played our best doubles match ever. We were poaching everything, and Lara was having some issues with her returns, so I was taking every deuce, and Lara was absolutely slamming the balls at them from the net," said Kung.

With the championship on the line, it all came down to a doubles match for Mira Phan '27 and Nitya Madduri '28. Michelle Oh '29 reflected on the tension while watching the match.

"Mira and Nitya did really well in the doubles match. They were the last match on, and we all congregated on the courts to come and watch them. They were in a super tight match with their opponents. The dou-



COURTESY OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY

Head Coach Katy Lambson and the eight members of Girls Tennis pose for a picture with their trophy in hand.

bles for Hotchkiss were really good, and we've had pretty easy wins for doubles all season, but this one was our hardest doubles match against a team. They were going into lots of long rallies and really long volley points, which was unusual, but I think that Mira and Nitya played well, and they handled their situation calmly. And they went into a super tiebreak after losing one game, which was stressful," said Oh.

Oh explained that leading up to the championship, the team worked on maintaining its focus and not getting overconfident, all while emphasizing doubles performance.

"Focus was a big thing leading into NEPSACs because we were approaching the end of the season, nearing finals, and the end of the term, and we

needed to really keep our focus up because we were on such a long winning streak. We didn't want to become relaxed. We also put a lot of focus on doubles continuing from last year," said Oh.

Approaching the end of the season, Mercan Draman '26 explained her emotions during her final week playing tennis at Andover and emerging victorious in the NEPSAC Championships.

"We had just won NEPSACs this weekend, so I feel like I was more emotional at that, so all my emotions were done by today, but I was still really sad at the end of my match. It was nostalgic mostly, and then my coach and I hugged, and we were showing our appreciation for each other," said Draman.



COURTESY OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY

The team gathers for a huddle.

## Girls Water Polo Ends Season with Third Place Finish at NEPSACs

LUCY VINNAKOTA

This past Saturday, Girls Water Polo had its final game of the season at the NEPSAC Championships, finishing third overall among a competitive field.

Sahana Manikandan '26 further elaborated on the team's mentality before the start of each game.

"We had a different plan going in because we were hoping to at least make the final match, since we were qualified. There were two teams, us and [Phillips] Exeter [Academy (Exeter)], who qualified for the place before the tournament had even started, so we had to adjust to the fact that we probably wouldn't be in the finals, but that was okay. We still had pretty high spirits, and everyone was really focused and paying attention. We did have some injuries from concussions, and recovering from concussions, but overall, we did pretty well," said Manikandan.

Going into the game, the team experienced difficulties that put them out of position. Although they wanted to win every game, a single loss significantly affected the final result. Madelyn Esposito '27 detailed the challenges throughout the tournament.

"Our goal was to win all our games. Going in, we know that we are a strong team. We lost our game to Exeter on the Wednesday before the tournament, which set us back a bit because it meant that we dropped our place in the tournament because we



Sarah Samoluk '26 (left) prepares to shoot, while Co-Captain Sophia You '26 (right) successfully blocks a shot.



AUDREY BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN

then lost a coin toss of who would get the third seed, but then, because we lost to Exeter, we had to coin toss, and we unfortunately lost. So then instead of playing two games, we now had to play in that," said Esposito.

Helen McNeely '29 explained how the team specifically prepared for the tournament.

"During the week before practices, we continued to work on things that we've been doing most of the season, just making sure we have specific things down, and we also did some fun team bond-

ing activities, like a psyche," said McNeely.

Overall, the tournament went well for the team despite experiencing some challenges. The team played three games, with two wins and one loss. Manikandan described the team's performance.

"This weekend was our tournament, so we played a total of three games, since it is also hosted at home. The first one went pretty well. We had mostly expected to win that one, and we did, against Deerfield. The second one was

against Choate.

We were originally supposed to play Choate in the finals, but due to a coin flip, we had to play them before, and unfortunately, we were not able to win against them, but we were kind of expecting that," said Manikandan.

Despite having played many games, the team remained positive and played better as a result. Esposito further elaborated on this point.

"We like to stay really positive about it. We knew another game would be more tiring, but we took

it really well and stayed positive. That's another strength of our team, being very adaptable and having a very adaptable mindset," said Esposito.

Going into next season, McNeely described her excitement going into the next season.

"We're all excited for next season. We're sad because we are losing quite a few Seniors, but overall we're generally excited," said McNeely.

## Boys Lacrosse Falls to Berkshire and Pingree

AVIAD AWA

SATURDAY 5/16

Andover 4

Berkshire 11

WEDNESDAY 5/20

Andover 5

Pingree 12

Over the last week, Boys Lacrosse (6-10) played Berkshire and Pingree, and fell to both. The team is currently on a ten game losing streak, with mul-

iple injuries and strong opponents contributing to these losses. The team looks ahead to finish on a high note against Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter).

Attackman Luke Honos '28 described Boys Lacrosse's general game plan for its game against Berkshire. Going up against an Ivy League recruit on the other side, defense was a key part of the game as they locked him out of the game, holding him to one goal.

"We had one of our defensive midfielders lock him off and face-guard him so he couldn't get the ball. That was our main defensive strategy. Offensively, our plan was to attack the weaker matchups

on their team and hopefully score a lot of goals. The defensive strategy worked," said Honos.

Midfielder Daniel Ko '29 praised teammate Kele Gregory '26 who stepped into and adapted to an unfamiliar position.

"One thing that was really important to the game was our defense stopping them a lot. Especially Kele Gregory, he stepped up on faceoffs because our regular faceoff guy is injured right now. He went up against a Harvard commit today, but he played really well, so he had a major positive impact on the team," said Ko.

Based on the coach's scout-

ing report, the team was able to prepare for some trick plays set up by Pingree. Honos shed light on how the team prepared for this highly anticipated matchup.

"We were really focused at practice, and we wanted to lock in to get ready for Pingree. This was a game we all really wanted to win. We practiced general things, but especially specific plays their team liked to run. Our coach scouted them, and we prepared for some of their trick plays and set plays. That preparation ended up helping in the game because our defense was able to stop a lot of those actions," said Honos.

Looking to build and learn

upon these matches, the team has its sights set on Exeter. Honos described the key points the team is looking to focus on in practices leading up to the season finale.

"We're going to work on our offense a lot, but honestly, a lot of it is just energy and chemistry. We're going to focus on having fun at practice and working together better because we definitely have the talent to beat Exeter. We just need to stay focused and set our sights on what we want," said Honos.

Boys Lacrosse will end its season at home against Exeter on Saturday.

## Golf Finishes Season at KO Tournament and Defeats Exeter

JOHN LEW

Golf (16-2-2) wrapped up its season placing fifth at the Kingswood Oxford (KO) Tournament and defeating Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) in its final match of the year.

The weekend tournament featured a deep field and difficult source setup, with players competing in intense heat and navigating challenging hole locations. Rocco Fawcett '28 highlighted a standout performance from Sebastian Montemayor '27.

"One moment I can remember

[was when] Sebastian Montemayor, who placed fifth or fourth in the tournament, made an eagle on the last hole, which was pretty impressive and important to clutch the fourth place... it was 92 [degrees] when we were playing and the course was really difficult. They had the pin locations in the hardest spots. That was a really hard course," said Fawcett.

Beyond the competition itself, Fawcett emphasized the team atmosphere throughout the trip. After traveling together and spending time as a group, the team entered the event with positive energy.

"We left Tuesday night, and

we went to dinner, so we had a lot of fun. We showed up, and we wanted to enjoy the weather and play the course," said Fawcett.

Before the tournament, Andover traveled to Breakfast Hill Golf Club for its final match of the season against Exeter, defeating its opponent 3.5 to 2.5 to secure the rivalry victory. Fawcett led the team with a seven under par round, while Montemayor earned a dominant ten and eight match play win. Ian Kim '28 elaborated on his teammates' impressive showings.

"Rocco shot seven or eight under. It was really good, and we were all very impressed... Se-

bastian won his match ten and eight, which is unheard of. He played very well and consistently. He also had a great season," said Kim.

Junu Lee '29 also reflected on the team's performance and the atmosphere surrounding the rivalry match.

"It was an eight versus eight match. We won by six and two. The golf teams are a really supportive and fun community. I love being a part of it. That makes these trips and tournaments really fun," said Lee.

The Exeter match also marked the final Andover appearances for Senior players Kevin Zheng

'26, Zorah Williams PG'26, and Captain Evan DeMayo '26, adding an emotional element to the day. Kim specifically highlighted the leadership and impact of the team's departing Seniors through the season.

"Kevin had some trouble off the tee, but everything else, he did very well... that was their last match at Andover. Zorah played very well, Evan had a rough day, but nonetheless, I'm very proud of all three of them for leading us and guiding us throughout the season," said Kim.

## Girls Lacrosse Endures First Loss, Bounces Back with Victories Against Deerfield and Brooks

WYATT ORRACA-CECIL

Girls Lacrosse (17-1) faced three matches this past week against Dexter Southfield (Southfield), Deerfield, and Brooks. It fell in its first loss of the season 6-10 to Southfield, defeated Deerfield 20-13, and overcame Brooks 23-5. This past weekend also being the Prep Cup and with the season approaching its end, Girls Lacrosse stroved to finish strong.

On Saturday, Girls Lacrosse faced Southfield, which it had

beaten earlier in the season 10-5. But on Dexter's home turf, the team started slow, ultimately facing its first loss of the season. Aubrey Orraca-Cecil '29 reflected on the team morale after the game.

"The energy was pretty low, which was expected because we lost... they were definitely a beatable team. We weren't playing our best, and we were also missing a lot of people. It was definitely a low because we could have potentially been undefeated," said Orraca-Cecil.

The next day, Girls Lacrosse had a matchup against Deerfield. Vanessa Hall '28 explained how

the team bounced back after suffering a hard blow.

"Our loss motivated us to come out really strong against Deerfield, because we didn't want to feel the way that we felt it after Dexter again. We came out fast and got on the board quickly, and our ball movement up the field was really good, and it was much better than our game on Saturday," said Hall.

The team went on to beat Deerfield 20-13. Hall commended Sophie Stetson '29 and Emma Morrison '28, who scored five goals each, for their roles in the win.

"They were all over the ball.

They caused a lot of turnovers, and that kept us in possession and didn't allow them to have a lot of chances to get upfield," said Hall.

Facing Brooks only three days later, Girls Lacrosse emerged victorious 23-5. Gracynn Hartley '27 reflected on the team's performance.

Hartley said, "The game was good, everyone played well. There was a mix of people on the field, which we usually don't have. It was pretty good... On offense, there are certain moments where the ball moved around super quickly, and we were able to get a good goal coming right off the

draw."

Hartley highlighted key players in the matchup against Brooks. "Our draw takers, Scarlet [Glass '26], Lola [Aguirre '26], Ashley [Dimnaku '28], and Emma, and the people in the circle did a great job getting the ball into the offense, working it around, and getting us really quick goals," said Hartley.

Girls Lacrosse will conclude its season on Friday with a rivalry matchup against Exeter.

# Girls Track & Field Secures Second Consecutive Victory in NEPSTA Championships, Boys Place Fourth

OLIVIA WANG

Track & Field recorded a successful finish at the New England Preparatory School Track and Field Association (NEPSTA) Division I Championships this past Saturday at Choate, where 13 boys teams and 14 girls teams competed for the titles. Boys Track and Field finished in fourth place with 37 points, while Girls Track and Field took the win with 125 points. Girls Track and Field also won last year's NEPSTA Championships, making them back-to-back champions.

The team went through extensive training to prepare for this meet, balancing physical conditioning but also recovery. Alessandro Reverdito '29 described the practices leading up to the championships that emphasized the importance of the race.

"We did a lot of prep going into it because every meet we're always doing workouts, runs, [and] lifting, everything to prepare, but for this meet especially [because it was] towards the end of the season. We've had a lot of prep going in, but we also made sure the week before to really reduce the volume and make sure we weren't pushing ourselves too much so we'd be fully rested for the race. For the distance runners, we weren't even supposed to run on Wednesday

like usual, which is really a one time thing, but it was to prep us for this race, because it really is the biggest race of the season by far," said Reverdito.

Eden Dunleavy '29 commented on the atmosphere of the meet, explaining that while there was pressure to perform well, the team's supportive environment built excitement and spirit.

"On the bus, everybody was tired and there [were] a lot of nerves, but there was definitely excitement. The fact that we were going to compete against other Division-I schools was definitely getting people really hyped about the meet, and right before going on, just being together as a community and setting up our tent together established a sense of community and support. We see a lot of support on the track team, just teammates helping each other and being there for one another's events," said Dunleavy.

Many athletes set personal records (PRs) at the meet, both individually and in team relays. Adanna Obi '29 commended members of both the girls and boys team for their strong performances.

"Our girls 4x400[-Meter Relay], which consisted of Jenna [Robertson-Palmer '27], Ela [Budzinski '28], Lauren [Signoriello '27], and Eden, won by a wild margin, 3.56 [seconds], which was a very



COURTESY OF JULIE CHAN

Girls Track & Field poses for a photo after winning the NEPSTA Division I Championships hosted at Choate.

impressive time. We also had some great jumping. We had Hailey [Piasecki '26] in the pole vault get second. We had Gabbie [Kawooya '27] in the triple jump who got fifth. Our boys team did a really great job in the 4x400[-Meter Relay] and the 4x100[-Meter Relay] as well. We had lots of PRs all around. I placed, which is cool because I was a freshman. Eden [Dunleavy '29] got second in the 400[-Meter Dash], and it was all around [a] really, really great meet," said Obi.

Gabbie Kawooya '27 shouted out Girls Track and Field Co-Captain Gracie Aziabor '26 for her leadership and con-

sistent support.

"[Gracie] is just such an inspiring person to be around and especially at a meet. It just becomes increasingly obvious why she got captained because of the way that she supports the team, supports all our teammates, and is always doing her best to be 100 percent there for each person who's on the track or doing a jump or any event that they're doing," said Kawooya.

Reverdito added that Track and Field will carry the momentum from the championship into its final meet of the season, and emphasized teammates' improvement over the course of the season.

"It sets a great expectation for the rest of the season because we performed really well. I know there were a lot of PRs. We're still having positive growth as a team. We're happy with our progress, and going into Andover/Exeter, our last meet of the season, we should all be looking forward to that because we've definitely grown a lot as a team," said Reverdito.

Track & Field looks forward to its final race against Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) this Saturday at home.

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## Boys Ultimate Falls Short at NEPSULs, finishes 5th

NICHOLAS JUNG

SATURDAY 5/16	
Andover	7
St. Sebastian's	9
SATURDAY 5/16	
Andover	12
Watkinson	4
SATURDAY 5/16	
Andover	11
Choate	8

Last Saturday, Boys Ultimate drove to Northfield Mount Hermon (NMH) to compete in the New England Prep School Ultimate League (NEPSUL) Championships. Competing in

a field of thirteen schools, Andover placed fifth. Last year, the team had also finished fifth. Andover played three schools: Watkinson, Choate, and St. Sebastian's, only losing to St. Sebastian's by two points.

As the NEPSUL Championships marked the end of the team's season, it was motivated to win. Cristian Ramirez '29 highlighted the team's expectations and goals going into the tournament.

"We came in with really high hopes. We wanted to win, and we probably could have won. We're looking forward to next year, seeing what we can bring. Overall, we enjoyed the experience," said Ramirez.

To prepare, the team took a day off from practice beforehand to provide students time to catch up on classwork. Zachary Yuan '27 emphasized the importance of the mental side of the game, knowing how it has impacted the team's playing ability in the past.

"We've won quite a lot of games this year, and we have a pretty strong team, so we expected to make a pretty deep run into the tournament. We

had Thursday practice off to get ourselves prepared. On Friday, we did a lot of situational [practice]. The emphasis was more on the mental side because we knew that we would not have been able to play well. Throughout the season, we've lost a couple of games due to falling apart mentally, so that was the emphasis," said Yuan.

One of the toughest challenges throughout the tournament was the St. Sebastian's game. Ramirez shared the team's reaction to losing to the team, since Andover beat them a few weeks ago. Ramirez acknowledged that St. Sebastian's played strong defense.

"We played St. Sebastian's in the first round, and that was the only game that we lost. It was a very hard-fought game. They presented really good defense, specifically, [playing] zone really well, and that kind of inhibited our ability to swing the disc if we wanted to move it around," said Ramirez.

Additionally, Yuan shared how wind played another factor into its playing abilities on Saturday. Not only did it make it hard for the team to run, but

it also made throwing the frisbees upwind extremely difficult.

"The biggest challenge was the wind. The forecast didn't say it was going to be that windy, but it turned out to be a crosswind, which was annoying. That ended up making it really hard to run some of our plays, especially the ones where we threw it pretty deep, because it was hard to throw it upwind. The other team managed that to its advantage and ran like a zone defense, which prevented us from being able to throw anything upfield," said Yuan.

Despite the loss, the team's chemistry stood out throughout the tournament, and several players stepped up on the field. Yuan highlighted some individual contributors who made an impact on the field.

"Nate Goldberg '27 had a couple of pretty good plays and a lot of stops. Dean Yang had a couple of good defensive plays and stepped up. [Captain] Cyrus Law [27] was pretty consistent with his throws," said Yuan.

But beyond individual per-

formances, the team demonstrated strong leadership throughout the day. As Paxton Auguste '28 noted, players grew into their roles, and NEPSULs reflected the team's growth.

"For big tournaments, especially NEPSULs, leadership roles are pretty balanced compared to earlier in the season. We all did a really good job lifting each other up," said Auguste.

Spirit of the game, a core value in ultimate frisbee, was another area where the team shone. Yuan noticed that despite the results, the sidelines stayed positive and respectful towards its opponents throughout the day.

"The spirit of the game is pretty important. [Head] Coach [Scott] Hoenig says it's as important as winning. Even if we're losing, we congratulate the opponents. Even though we didn't win the spirit award, we did a good job overall spirit-wise. Our sideline was pretty good with cheering and chatting with the other team," said Yuan.

## GNB Ultimate Competes at NEPSUL Tournament

JULIEN REQUA & ATHREYA YEGNESWARAN

SATURDAY 5/16	
Andover	9
Miss Porter's School	5
SATURDAY 5/16	
Andover	5
NMH	8
SATURDAY 5/16	
Andover	1
The Academy at Charlemont	9

GNB Ultimate competed in the NEPSUL tournament last weekend at Northfield Mount Hermon, facing three opponents over a long day of competitive play. The team opened the tournament with a 9-5 victory over Miss Porter's School, before falling short to NMH 5-8 and The Academy at Charlemont 1-9. Despite difficult weather conditions and a limited lineup, the team continued to show improvement in strategy, communication, and overall skill throughout the tournament.

Across three back-to-back games, the team would overcome difficult conditions, including intense heat and a shortened rotation due to injuries and fatigue. Angela Wang '29 reflected on the atmosphere of the tournament and the team's ability to maintain consistent energy throughout the day.

"We had some really tough

games, and there were moments where it was hard to keep the energy up, especially because it was around 80 degrees that day. Even then, everyone was trying their best and staying positive. We also have a spirit circle at the end of every game to help keep morale high. After the first game, everyone was especially excited because we had won," said Wang.

Octavia Chung '29 reflected the strategy and awareness that helped the team find early success in the tournament.

"In the first game, there was a specific area on the field that was always open, and our team did a good job recognizing that spot and continuously using it. We were looking around the field, identifying what was open, and taking advantage of it," said Chung.

The team was forced to adjust its lineup during the tournament after injuries reduced

available substitutions, leading several players to spend more time on the field than usual against strong competition. Ming-Yi Tang '29 explained how the absences impacted both the lineup and the team's endurance throughout the day.

"Charlize Sow '28 is one of the returning players with more experience, so we had to adjust our lineup after her injury. Being down a player also affected our substitutions and how often people had to stay on the field. At one point, Iris Liu '26 [co-captain], Niki Tavakoli '27 [co-captain], and Jane Hlavaty '28 played several points in a row, which is unusual because players usually sub every other point," said Tang.

Tang explained how the team tailored its preparation leading up to NEPSULs, the team's biggest tournament of the year, depending on each player's level of experience.

"The newer players focused

on improving their throws and becoming more consistent. The more experienced players worked a lot on cuts, hucks, and running long distances," said Tang.

In addition to improving physically, the team also strengthened its mental approach before the tournament. Chung highlighted how strategy became a major focus during practices, especially before the game.

"Last week, the team worked more on strategy-based elements. I think that ultimately made the biggest improvement by the end of the season. We did not have a lot of time, so learning strategy was important because it allowed us to outsmart the other team rather than just relying on athleticism," said Chung.

Girls Ultimate will face neighbors Andover High at home in a highly anticipated match this Friday.

## Boys Tennis Falls to Exeter in Last Match of the Season

EVA JACKSON

Boys Tennis (2-11) lost to Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) 2-5 in its last match of the season.

In its second matchup of the season, the team had improved and it ended up winning matches against Exeter it lost previously. George Richardson '27 shouted out Senior Co-Captains Ben Shin '26 and Jeff Shen '26 for their strong performances.

"Both Ben and Jeff were both able to perform a lot better than [how] we did in the middle of

our term. With Jeff, he ended up beating his opponent, and with Ben, it came down to, essentially, a one point difference with the kid that he played, who had previously beaten him in the season. They both performed really well, and it was really sweet seeing a lot of friends and Jeff's friends come out and support them when they're on their last match on the team," said Richardson.

The team played Exeter earlier this season, when it got swept. Tomas Tejapaibul '27 described the team's excitement for the rematch.

"Exeter had beaten us pretty

badly before earlier in the season, and they had also come second in the [NEPSAC] Class A Championships. There was maybe a little bit of hesitance in that way, but at the same time, we were also really excited to play them again," said Tejapaibul.

Since it was the last game for Shin and Shen, the rest of the team celebrated and brought a high level of energy into the matches. Sean Liu '28 described the attitude of the games and the team's support of the Seniors.

"Leaving posters for the Seniors who are leaving, and I feel as the last game for the Seniors,

the spirits were high. Even though we didn't win, we were able to cheer on our Senior teammates, especially. It was fun, we are planning on having a team dinner on Friday," said Liu.

The team's energy made up for the unpredictable conditions throughout the matches, which, according to Liu, had an effect on the matches. Liu described the variability of the weather throughout all matches.

"It was alternating between super, dupe windy, and very sunny, and hot. It was either, you were getting baked under the sun, or it was very windy all the

time. The ball would go in different directions, and it made it pretty hard to adjust," said Liu.

Richardson shared a message of gratitude to the team's seniors.

"I would like to say a thank you to both of our Seniors, Jeff Shen, Ben Shin, for a great three years or so on the team. It's been really, really fun working alongside them. I've been playing with them in doubles, so they'll be missed, for sure," said Richardson.

# Write for Sports!



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## Grit in the Semifinals: Andover Baseball Falls Short to Dexter, Shifts Focus to Exeter Finale

TIGER WANG

SATURDAY 5/16

Andover 2

Dexter 4

On Saturday, Baseball hoped to end its four-year drought against longstanding rival Dexter Southfield (Dexter) and extend its four-game winning streak into a deep postseason run. Despite the commanding energy and excitement from the dugout, the team ultimately fell short in a close 2-4 battle. While playoffs have come to an end, the team pivots its focus to Senior Night

for an anticipated, tie-breaking matchup against Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) to close out its season on a high note.

Thomas Perri '29 emphasized the program history with Dexter that fueled the matchup.

"Before the game, I would say it was one of the most hyped we have been for a matchup all year because we had not beaten Dexter in four years. That put a little chip on our shoulder, and we really wanted to win that game to prove ourselves. It was a playoff semifinal, we had Grant McCubrey PG'26 on the mound, and all the pieces were in the right place. Even as the game did not go our way throughout the night, the energy stayed up the whole time. Guys were always up on the fence cheering each other on.

The energy was definitely there all game with the playoff environment," said Perri.

Matthew Shampine PG '26 commended that while both teams featured their best pitchers on the mound, Dexter ultimately found the critical breakthroughs to secure the win.

"Both teams threw pitchers who throw really hard, matching one of our best guys against one of their best guys. They both touched 93 miles per hour on the day, which is very impressive stuff to see in high school baseball. I would not say they had a significantly better day than us, but they produced runs by stringing together hits. It was a pretty even game ending four to two. They outbattled us and got a couple of extra key hits, and that

is just how baseball goes," said Shampine.

Owen Prior '29 elaborated that while the team struggled offensively, Andover's pitching rotation kept the team within striking distance for the game.

"There were chances where we were just one hit away, but sometimes that is just how the game goes. We had runners on with two outs and could not get them in, which happens sometimes. Both of the pitchers who threw, Grant McCubrey and Jacob Honor [27], did a great job keeping us in that game and giving our offense a chance," said Prior.

Looking forward, Baseball hopes to close the year with a definitive and decisive win against Exeter, as Shampine noted.

"It is going to be Senior Night, so a bunch of guys are going to get to pitch. It is going to be a really fun atmosphere, and hopefully there will be a lot of people there. We just need to stick to what we believe in, put our best foot forward, and go out there. We are going to have fun, but we are also going to try our best to win. We split with Exeter the first time, winning one game and losing one game, so this is the decider. It is a big game for our pride. Even if it is not for a championship, we really want to win this game," said Shampine.

Baseball will face Exeter on Saturday.

## Don't Let a Bad Call Ruin Baseball

to fully implement it.

The ABS system is a technology that tracks the position of a ball as it travels from the pitcher's mound to the plate. According to "MLB.com," it uses Hawk-Eye cameras to pinpoint the exact location of the ball when it arrives at the plate. This technology is not new; the Korean Baseball League (KBO) has fully implemented it since the 2024 season, and Minor League Baseball has implemented it since 2019. Despite initial backlash and doubts about its accuracy, the ABS system has boasted 99.9% accuracy in the KBO, according to the "Korea Times." In previous seasons, I was baffled by calls far off the plate that would make the game painful to watch. It was annoying and made me want to stop watching. Having seen the ABS in full action firsthand, I can say it has worked brilliantly over the past two seasons. There are no more blown calls that ruin the game, and it is exhilarating to see balls that clip the edge called strike.

Much of the backlash against the ABS system stems from the loss of the "human element" of the sport: an umpire's judgment is a core part of baseball, a tradition dating back to the sport's origins. However, at its core, this claim is an argument that chooses what is factually wrong over what is factually right. No other major sports praise inaccuracy as an achievement. Basketball refs are not rewarded for blatantly wrong foul calls. Soccer officials are not celebrated for their personal definition of an offside. We have the technology to review calls with the NBA



KRISTEN MA/THE PHILLIPIAN

replay center and VAR in soccer. So, why does baseball have to be determined by inaccurate calls? If we have the technology to make correct calls, there is no need to avoid it and rely on human error. According to "FanGraphs," umpires posted an accuracy rate of 92.83%. Why stop there when you can go for 99.9%?

MLB currently uses a challenge system in which each team has two challenge at-

tempts to overturn strikes and balls. An overturned challenge retains the number of challenges. While it is a step in the right direction, the problem is obvious. Why does the batter, catcher, or pitcher have to spend a challenge to get a correct call? I have seen countless players hesitate to challenge calls for fear of losing a challenge they might need later in the game if a call is blown. Strikes and balls need to be made correctly. Umpires still

keep their jobs of calling plays at the plate, check swings, and foul balls. Although catchers become obsolete in the sense of framing, they still play an important role in preventing steals and passed balls. Baseball is coming off its most-watched postseason, and the momentum of both new and old fans can not be squandered by wild calls. The sport of baseball deserves a real solution to a real problem.

## Before the Spotlight

OLIVIA WANG

Over the course of the years, the status of Junior Varsity (JV) has been coined as an insult in high school athletics.

The gap between JV and Varsity teams has drastically increased, and the difference between making a Varsity team or not may determine one's athletic reputation. Students use the term jokingly, whenever someone misses a shot, loses a game, or makes a mistake. Social media blasts Varsity highlights, and JV scores are announced once in a blue moon. Over time, JV became not good enough, but in reality, JV is the most underrated and underrepresented part of high school athletics.

At a school like Andover, where there is such a wide variety of sports and levels within each sport, Varsity teams naturally have all the attention. Eventually, the significance of JV athletics is lost in Varsity celebrations. Varsity performances become the public face of Andover sports, and rivalry matchups like Andover/Exeter are packed with cheering crowds, while JV competes in the shadows.

However, that is not to say that Varsity athletes don't deserve the recognition. They absolutely should be recognized and applauded for their commit-



GEMMA PARK/THE PHILLIPIAN

ment. The real issue is that current high school sports culture prevents JV from being praised when they do emerge victorious, and athletes aren't assumed to be truly good at the sport until they make Varsity.

JV is where players develop the long-term qualities of a strong athlete: resilience, confidence, and determination. Varsity is where those qualities are

showcased. JV builds athletes, Varsity polishes them.

Behind the success of every Varsity program, there will always be a hard working team of JV athletes who quietly do the work.

The difficulty of being a JV athlete does not come from the competition, but rather the mindset that comes with that role. Because Varsity athletes are

constantly put out into the spotlight and frequently perform in front of crowds, players have a stronger motivation to improve and dedicate themselves to the sport. In JV, the same cannot be said. It's much more challenging to stay motivated when games attract small audiences and the players feel uncertain about their role in the sport. Because of this, JV athletes lack the drive to keep up a reputation, so instead, they improve through pure self-motivation. They attend practices, matches, and competitions without the recognition that Varsity gets, yet they still put in just as much effort.

JV sports are humbling in a certain way. Because the spotlight is much smaller, image matters less, and effort matters more. They cannot rely on reputation alone to feed their ambition, so they improve silently, and often without applause or praise. Through this, JV players learn how to handle loss over and over again, and continue to work towards a goal even when it feels as if it is unachievable.

Ultimately, JV teams are not disconnected from Varsity teams at all. They are the foundation and engine of incredible Varsity programs. Successful Varsity programs are built up from years of development at lower levels. Every Varsity athlete was once inexperienced, and needed a place to grow and

develop their skills without the pressure.

High school sports culture often disregards the connection between the two, and puts the importance of Varsity on a pedestal over JV. "Did they make Varsity?" becomes the most important question, and after a while, the conversation around sports becomes more about status than growth.

The pressure to be on Varsity affects student athletes more than they realize. Many students find themselves wondering whether being on JV is even worth it, and quit before they realize their potential to compete at a higher level. JV exists to support the development of athletes, not diminish it.

High school sports, especially at Andover, should foster a community that not only celebrates the achievements of Varsity athletes, but also acknowledges what it took to get them to where they are. After all, behind many Varsity athletes is a JV player who almost gave up, but didn't. An athlete who struggled before succeeding, and kept improving long before anyone knew their name.



# ARTS & LEISURE

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## Cello-Boxing and Inspirational Sound: Kevin Olusula '06 in Concert

HAYLEY FAN

With a cello in hand and beatboxing woven through his music, Kevin Olusula '06, a member of the a cappella group Pentatonix, returned to Andover with a concert featuring performances by Fidelio Society (Fidelio) and Chamber Orchestra.

Olusula opened the concert with a solo repertoire, including his rendition of "Julie-O" by Mark Summer, the piece that first went viral online during his senior year of college. He followed with "Hallelujah (I Don't Think About You)." Cellist Philip Jeong '27 described his experience at the concert.

"It was a very novel take on classical music, and as he says, it's a very overarching pedagogy for musicians. Adding modern elements, such as beatboxing, is unexpected. Yet, it works. That's why so many people came to watch, and everyone had a great time," said Jeong.

The following piece was a collaboration with Andover's Fidelio Society. Fidelio performed a nuanced arrangement of "Crazy" by Gnarl Barkley with Olusula on the cello. Fidelio member Hannah Oh '27 reflected on the process of rehearsing with Olusula.

"I would say that our rehearsals were super chill. In



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Three time Grammy winner Kevin Olusula '06 practices inside Falls Center before his performance.

our first rehearsal, we got to talk with him for around 40 minutes and get to know him and his life story. Then we just sang with him a couple times and it was great... I was surprised that he had earpieces in his ear and Dr. Siegfried had to go along with a click track. Honestly, it was a little scary because the click track

didn't work 3 times before we started. But then it ended up working out," said Oh.

The Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Instructor in Music Derek Jacoby, followed with "Dark Winter." The piece meshed virtuosic elements of Vivaldi's original concerto with contemporary elements like high-energy beat drops.

Their second piece, "Kevin's Fifth," is a reimagined version of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Jacoby reflected on the rewarding challenge of adapting to Olusula's rhythmically driven style.

"The pieces were really cool. They all had a really great rhythmic drive. They had a feel and a way about

them that we don't typically get in classical music, so it was really interesting to learn how to play the music and then dig into the music and play it more in the style that Kevin wanted. We had to be rhythmically precise to a higher level than we've ever had to before because we had that click track that I was listening to. It kept me and Kevin and the orchestra in perfect time together. It was the level of attention to detail with rhythm that was a good challenge for us," said Jacoby.

Beyond the musical performance, Olusula spoke at All-School Meeting (ASM) on Friday about his own path as an artist and the importance of originality. Oh reflected on how his message resonated with and impacted her.

"I think he is genuinely one of the most inspirational people I've ever met in my life. I feel like people might see his speech or his message as something cliché or crazy, but at the end of the day, it's genuinely true. What he talked about with finding his path was really cool. Overall, I found him really inspirational, and he motivates me to keep doing what I do. Like him, I'm also trying out different things at school, and I feel a little crazy, but I really connect with his saying about how we're all original," said Oh.

## A Saturday Night to Remember: The Den Show

ELIZABETH QIN

The crowd doubled in height as people climbed onto couches and rode on each other's shoulders this Saturday at the student band Goose&Moose's annual Den Show. Vibes were at an all-time high as students cheered on features such as 6PM, Notes from Graceland, and even Kevin Olusula '06.

In the middle of the show, Olusula stepped onto the stage and was greeted with raucous cheers. A member of the world-renowned a cappella group Pentatonix, Olusula performed with Goose&Moose, showcasing his beatboxing skills. Gemmi Haripottawekul '28, an audience member, shared her reaction to watching Olusula perform.

"I went to the Den Show not knowing he was coming, but maybe ten minutes before he came on, I was about to leave. But then, my friend texted me, saying Kevin's coming soon. I was like, whoah, what? And so I stayed around, and it was definitely a really good choice because [the performance]

was amazing. There was one part where he was beatboxing, and Cameron [Butler '28] was on the drums, and they were going back and forth. I was so hyped. I was standing on the couches and jumping up and down," said Haripottawekul.

From 9:00 p.m. until a few minutes before final sign-in for boarding students, the Den Show kept students singing along. For Haripottawekul, this show was a first and opened up a whole new side of campus life.

"One of my biggest regrets so far as a new Lower is not going out to more of these shows in the past two terms. I went to Knollchella. I was so hyped, and then I came to [the Den Show], which was a completely different level of hype. Everyone was on their feet. I was dancing. This was the first time I was screaming my lungs out. It was so fun. Just the vibes of everyone being there, no one was scared or embarrassed to sing their hearts out, and I feel like that's what makes it so amazing and so memorable. I don't think words can be put together to justify how fun and amazing the atmosphere was,"



JEREMIAH NUÑEZ/THE PHILLIPIAN

Amina Gorman '26 sings alongside Ethan Liu '26's saxophone performance

said Haripottawekul.

From guest features to show openers, the concert featured a variety of performers besides Goose&Moose, all bringing their own talent and enthusiasm on stage. Jona-

than Oh '27, the bassist for Goose&Moose and 6PM, described the process of choosing a setlist.

"We first compiled a list of all of the songs that we liked and were interested in playing during Winter Term, and then started the cutting process. We narrowed it down to around 30 [songs], made a playlist, and continued to cut and add songs up until the very end. We always have features for our show, so depending on the songs our features wanted to sing, we compromised and added different songs from different genres," said Oh.

Over the years, the Den Show has become a key part of Andover's band culture and student life, with more

students attending each year. Harry Wang '27, the tenor saxophonist for Goose&Moose elaborated on how the Den Show has grown across his time at Andover.

"We are having more and more features join our performance, also branching off to having other bands join our show. For this year specifically, we are lucky to have a Grammy-awarded alumni, Kevin Olusula, to join us for the show. We want to keep expanding our group and continue the band culture on campus," said Wang.



JEREMIAH NUNEZ / THE PHILLIPIAN

Kevin Olusula '06 performs alongside Goose&Moose.

## Photon Draws Light, and the Year, to a Close at Glowshow

### CHARLIZE SOW

In a darkened Borden last Saturday night, glow poi traced arcs through the air as members of Photon performed in Glowshow, the club's annual end-of-year showcase. The program featured routines with poi, yoyo, rope dart, and clubs, props all lit up by LED lights that shifted color throughout the performances. Returning acts from Grasshopper, Winter Pep Rally, and Spring Andover Dance Festival joined new solos and duets, closing with Senior Act, a surprise duet from the club's graduating members.

Cindy Yang '26, co-head of Photon, performed in various parts of the show, including two solos and Senior Act. The show marked Yang's fourth and final Glowshow, and upon reflecting, Yang shared how the event has come to represent the support community they have found at Andover.

"Glowshow is Photon's only annual show, obviously, so it means a lot to me. My first Glowshow, I did a yoyo duet with Wooba [Song '26], and it was really awesome because even though we both dropped our yoyos once and messed up the ending a little, the entire crowd was so excited for us. I really felt that energy and that love from the community. Glowshow is the epitome of that feeling that people really care about each other and want to support each other at this school. Of course, people are doing really cool things, but more importantly, people are

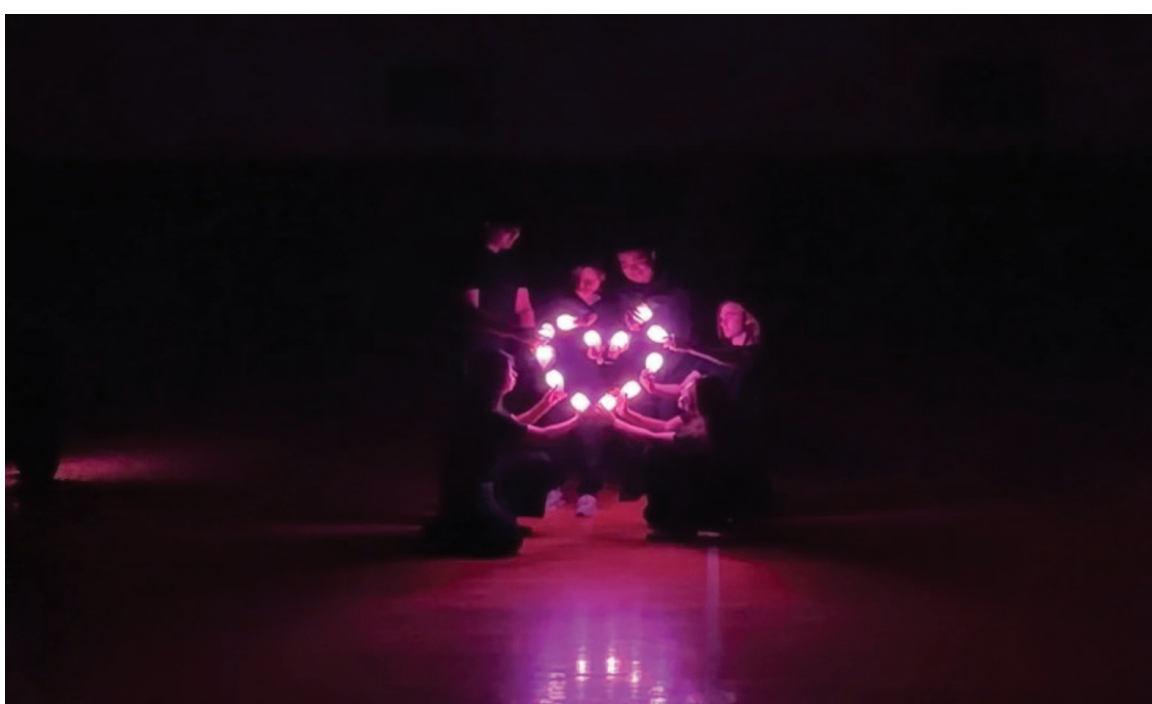
really lifting each other up and supporting each other. That's why Glowshow matters a lot to me," said Yang.

Photon prepared the show act by act over the course of Spring term, with each routine running its own rehearsal schedule before coming together for a tech rehearsal in Borden. Allegra Lee '27, who has performed in Photon for three years, said the show's preparation was largely self-directed.

"We start a document at the very beginning of the term with all the acts that people want to start or redo. Then people put their names down and sign up for them. The act leaders coordinate rehearsals among themselves and their people. Then we basically host a tech rehearsal in Borden. It's something pretty individualized, to get everyone prepared for the show. It's everyone's individual projects, and then it all comes together at the end," said Lee.

The program included several new pieces alongside returning routines. Alex Lin '28 choreographed "Grand Escape," a beginner-friendly act that taught her about what it takes to teach.

"The most valuable thing I learned wasn't actually any flashy new moves. It was how to organize people and teach people how to spin. No one comes into Andover knowing how to spin poi. Most people in Photon right now, before coming here, didn't even know that this was a thing that existed. So everybody has to start from scratch. Knowing how to teach people moves, put yourself in their shoes as people who have never touched



Photon forms a heart in the middle of Borden.

poi before, guide them through things, encourage them, and pass down this art is more important than I ever could have imagined. This year's Glowshow, by leading so many acts and leading many beginners, taught me a lot about how to teach," said Lin.

Yang's poi solo this year was a cover of "Get Your Wish," a routine originally choreographed by an alum from the class of 2024. Yang noted the solo's significance in what they hoped to convey through their performance.

"I just really hope that the audience felt the joy that I was

trying to convey. For my final Glowshow, I really wanted it to matter, obviously. I wanted to perform pieces that really mattered to me. I hope the audience took away that feeling of joy, that feeling of hope, and that feeling of triumph that I was feeling on stage when I was performing 'Get Your Wish' and Senior Act. I was realizing how much I had grown in these past four years," said Yang.

The show closed with Senior Act, a duet between Yang and Song set to Porter Robinson's "Sweet Time." Yang said that the song captured what Photon had given them over four years

ALLEGRA LEE/THE PHILLIPIAN

at Andover.

"I chose 'Sweet Time' because it was very mellow and bittersweet. One of the lyrics is something like, 'All the world is lucky to be your home,' and I felt like that really resonated with how I feel about Photon and how grateful I am to Photon for giving me this place where I felt I really belonged on campus. That was one of the reasons I chose that music. So that's what inspired my pieces," said Yang.

## Unusual Weather; Shifting Climates Shown Through Ballet and Contemporary

### CHARLIZE SOW

The Unusual Weather dance performance took place in the Pan Athletic Center (Pan) on Friday and Saturday evening, featuring both ballet and contemporary pieces. Dance instructor Katie Clark choreographed the entire performance for the Dance as a Sport class.

Clark elaborated on the broader themes of the show and the specific meanings of each piece.

"The show was loosely based on themes of perseverance and the complexities of what it means to navigate a hardship of some kind. An image that the ballet piece was loosely based on was the game of chess. We strayed away from that as the process continued, but it started as the idea of conflict and odds of something going dramatically differently from moment to moment. The second piece, I played with the image of the ocean and mostly focused on how powerful the ocean is and how scary and just an entity that it is," said Clark.

Anastasiya Sycheva '29, who danced in both pieces, embodied the ocean's moving body through her ballet. She reflected on how her group used motion to symbolize the ocean.

"In one of the main dances I was in, there was a part where we were a clump, and we were rocking back and forth to show this metaphor to the ocean how there are waves and shifting tides. Our piece was called 'Ris-

ing Tides, Shifting Currents,' which really reflects the changing times right now with a metaphor to the ocean. They were just these beautiful pieces with a lot of emotion. It was clear that everyone in the show put a lot of effort in," said Sycheva.

At the beginning of every rehearsal, the class had a routine playlist and warm-up to set the mood before a practice or a performance. Liv Davis '29 appreciated this tradition and the community it built.

"We always have warm-up classes. You spend so much time together that if you're not friends with other people it gets boring, and it often takes some of the fun out of performing. You're part of such a great performance, so it's not necessary to become friends, but it definitely makes the process so much easier and much more fun. You really bond in tech week, [and it] is a big one because you spend so much time together. But also on stage, it really shows because rather than having five strangers on stage you have a group of friends all performing and connecting with each other," said Davis.

Breanna Ren '29 described the dance community and its effect on the actual performance itself.

"The dance community at Andover is definitely really close and tight-knit. Everyone's really welcoming and open to trying different things, and as well as really open to helping each other. For the creative part, all of the choreography



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The group performs "Adrift and Rising Tides, Shifting Currents."

was done by Ms. Clark, so this is a really special opportunity for her to be able to choreograph and do something so meaningful to her. Us as a group as well we got to understand how we dance and to know what each other are good at," said Ren.

Spending the same amount of time together as many varsity sports, Clark recognized their growth as a group and its reflection upon the stage.

"By the time we reach the stage, this small group of dancers has been through so much together. They have just worked

so hard for it. They do bond. It is an intimate experience. In all of the pieces, no matter what size, they really, when they step onto the stage, they're doing so much. They're feeling each other in the space, and they're trying to be aware of each other spatially, but energetically as well," said Clark.

The entire performance only consisted of five cast members, and Ren reflected on the effect of this small, close community.

"The entire thing itself is such an important memory, and we have a lot of dance or

opportunities throughout like the entire year at Andover. Something special in this one is it's such a comparatively smaller group of people and you get to know every single one of them. Before the performance, everyone is prepping each other, saying good luck. Bonding with each of them through this opportunity is so nice and as well as how much closer I've gotten to Ms. Clark through this performance," said Ren.

# WRITE FOR ARTS!

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## “Love Never Fails” Among the Gospel Choir: A Year in Reflection

**CHARLIZE SOW**

Hands clasped and raised to the ceiling of the Cochran Chapel last Sunday evening, members of the Gospel Choir sang the final notes to “He Holds My Hand.” It was the Gospel Choir’s last performance of the year, and for the Seniors among them, the close of their performances with the group.

The concert was the culmination of Wednesday rehearsals featuring both returning pieces and new repertoire. Papa Paintsil ’26, co-head of the Gospel Choir, reflected on the preparation process.

“For this performance, we had been preparing for the concert essentially the entire term. This concert was a mix of old songs that we’ve sung in prior years and also new songs that we hadn’t had the chance to perform yet this year. We rehearse in a call-and-response type of way, and we don’t use sheet music. When we rehearse, we only have lyrics. Mr. [Michael] Belcher plays us the notes for what we need to do, and then we keep repeating it and singing until we really internalize the harmonies,” said Paintsil.

That rehearsal process built toward a program of pieces that many members of the choir connected to personally. For Aura Lewis ’29, one song in particular carried meaning in offering reassurance.

“A piece that was really meaningful to me was ‘Alright,’

because I had a solo, and I was kind of nervous for that. But also, it resonated with me because the piece is basically about how everything is going to be all right. Coming toward the end of spring term, it’s really, really stressful. The message just kind of relates. Everything will be all right,” said Lewis.

This deep connection to the pieces was further emphasized by Paintsil, who described how each piece required him to convey a different emotion and message through his performances.

“When I perform, it depends on the piece. Sometimes it’s about the emotion of the song. There’s a song that we do during ASM called ‘Love Never Fails.’ When I’m singing that, I’m really trying to show the passion and the love that I have for myself, my friends, and my school community. Then there are songs like ‘Safety.’ The words of the song are ‘safety in the Lord,’ ‘healing in the Lord,’ ‘peace in the Lord,’ and feelings like that. So for that, I might take on a more somber tone while still focusing on doing really well with the harmonies,” said Paintsil.

Gospel Choir’s emphasis on expressive, lively singing in combination with the ensemble’s smaller size, has created a space where individual voices are encouraged to stand out. For Gabi Perez ’28, that environment has facilitated her growth and confidence as a singer.

“It helped me be more confident with my voice. Before, my voice was really quiet. I would never really try to stick



COURTESY OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY

Gospel Choir performs in front of the student body during All School Meeting.

out, but here, you’re supposed to be loud, you’re supposed to let your voice just sound, so I’d say that’s one of the major changes I’ve had. Other than that, it’s just the fun of it,” said Perez.

While some members have found meaning in the choir as a space for personal growth, others, like Paintsil, view it as a way to connect with their heritage.

“Gospel music has a really important place in my background and in my history growing up. I feel like some of my

earliest memories come from my mom singing gospel songs to me, whether it was at church, right before I went to sleep, or something of that nature. Gospel music and Christ have both been important to me in a religious sense, but also in terms of culture. Gospel music is so integral to the Ghanaian community. I am of Ghanaian descent, so gospel music is really, really important to me,” said Paintsil.

As a Senior and co-head, Paintsil reflected on what it meant to say goodbye to the

choir he had helped lead for four years.

“This final performance was really bittersweet because I feel like we did a really, really good job with the practice time that we were allotted. But it was also really sad for me because it was the last time I was singing with so many of these people in the same space. This is going to be the first year in a while that Gospel Choir hasn’t had me as someone spearheading the group,” said Paintsil.

## ART600 Students Take on ‘Epilogue’ Exhibition

**GRAYSON FLYNN ’26**

“I primarily work with film, specifically documentaries, and photography. In my filmmaking, I focus on nature storytelling, as well as extreme sports in the outdoors—my latest film was an ultramarathon documentary. I was fortunate enough to grow up with extremely outdoorsy parents. My whole childhood and upbringing was shaped around the outdoors, whether it was skiing or hiking or mountain biking. This created my passion and love for the outdoors, which is the number one inspiration for all my work. This piece in particular mainly focuses on how an epilogue or ‘the end’ is not one moment, but rather years of memories and separate pieces of life, and you can only see the full image when they are all put together.”

**SOPHIA YOU ’26**

“One of the main challenges I faced is when you have to do art for a class. Sometimes I lack the motivation to do it because it feels less creative and more like a burden. I feel like the message I wanted to convey is that there’s value in the process of making things. A lot of times when I do art, I focus on the finished piece, and then I just think of the process as more grueling, especially with hyperrealism. But this year, I’ve really been trying to appreciate the actual process of drawing and how that in itself is really valuable. My art this year has really reflected a lot of the things that I’ve been thinking about.

After going to boarding school, obviously I moved far away from my family, so I’ve been thinking a lot about family. I’ve just been reflecting a lot on childhood and the past now that I’m about to graduate. [The piece is] a combination of excitement for the future and appreciation for the past.”

**PENELOPE TONG ’26**

“When deciding on my Art 600 project, I knew I wanted to do something more than just painting, and I figured taxidermy was probably a good way to stand out from previous projects. I’ve sort of warmed myself up to the process by doing taxidermy-adjacent work, like mummification or just tanning [or] drying the skin. Evidently in my current project, I’m really inspired by meat, especially red meat. It just looks really pretty, and it’s a fun subject to paint. I used to be a lot more focused on realism and technical skill. I still am, but now I think I allow myself to have more fun while painting. I take a lot more risks than I used to because I’m more confident in my abilities to fix things.”

**JIA-YI ZHI**

*In the recently opened Art 600 exhibit titled ‘Epilogue,’ students were challenged to express what an epilogue meant to them. This theme was especially important to many of the Seniors in the class, who are beginning to think about their futures and the epilogues to their Andover experiences. From photography to painting to 3D installations, each artist captured their interpretation of the annual theme through creation.*



EMMANUEL OKEKE / THE PHILLIPIAN



**JACK ANGELO ’26**

“I primarily work in architectural models, 3D design, and illustration. I like to explore themes of human representation by highlighting how different cultures or eras define themselves through their art. As an artist I struggle with being okay with small imperfections in my work. Sometimes, I scrap ideas if one thing doesn’t work for me. I overcame this on this project by really pushing myself to keep working knowing that I should only judge my work as a whole product. My project actually started as just a sketchbook drawing I drew two years ago while watching ‘Stranger Things.’ If I ever were to actually design buildings, I don’t want them to necessarily make a noticeable impact on people, I want to subconsciously benefit people’s lives through more creativity being added to our urban spaces.”

**BELLA SHMUYLOVICH ’26**

“I mainly use alcohol markers for illustrations. My art style is definitely not realistic, it’s more stylized with very specific facial features. My art usually has different characters that I develop from people I meet and see everywhere. I tend to make little stories for them and illustrate their lives. My current challenge in my art is coming up with new characters. I usually draw the same characters over and over, like my character Linus the Fisherman. I want to push myself to draw new characters. I try to overcome these challenges by bringing my sketchbook to more places. I try to have some sort of sketchbook in my backpack so I can draw when I get inspired by people I see.”

**AEVA CLEARE ’26**

“I’m mainly a sculptor, which can be very inter-medium. For example, the headdress is decorated with acrylic, gems, and feathers. I’ve also worked with wire, to an extent. However, the painting is acrylic with air dry clay stars. My work is very tied to the idea of identity. I think my philosophy is that we’re all made up of one million little pieces of the people around, and those pieces are supposed to be how people interact with one another to create new colours and something bigger themselves, like a star. I want people to come out of my work feeling a little bit better about whatever situation they’re in. It’s supposed to be uplifting or a little kick of joy, if you will. If I achieve that, then I think I’ve succeeded.”

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