

## After 30 Issues, CXLVII Bids Farewell to the Newsroom

NIKI TAVAKOLI & SAKETH LINGISETTY

This paper marks the first issue of *The Phillipian*, vol. CXLVIII. Following *The Phillipian's* board turnover on January 24, all Senior Editors, Managers, and members of Upper Management in vol. CXLVII have formally left the Newsroom.

Louisa Carter '25, former Editor in Chief, noted how *The Phillipian* has changed her perspective and granted her a new worldview. She expressed appreciation for every member of the paper, and shared gratitude for being a part of the Andover community.

"[*The Phillipian*] was the best thing that could have happened to me... When you do *The Phillipian*, you see all the things other people are doing. It gives you just this level of awareness and gratitude for the community... It's changed the way that I want to engage with the world in general, and the people who I want to surround myself with. I'm so immensely grateful for all the people in Upper Management, all the Editors, Associates, and



Senior Editors and Upper Management of CXLVII stand in front of Samuel Phillips Hall.

so on, because when you're in the Newsroom with them, you just realize how incredible they all are," said Carter.

Former Executive Editor Jacqueline Gordon '25 also reflected on the positive impact that *The Phillipian* had on her, explaining how it's been a consistent passion of hers throughout her time at Andover.

"There's just something consuming about [*The Phillipian*] in a positive way. Once you fall in love with it it's hard to fall out of love with it, especially as you move up into positions, start to get more knowledge, and get deeper into it. Over time I've grown more aware of how important *The Phillipian* is on campus, but also just in my life. It's been a very big constant for me throughout all of my terms here and I've loved every moment of it," said Gordon.

Looking towards the future, Bailey Xu '26, a former News Associate and a current Managing Editor, shared initiatives that CXLVIII may pursue. She emphasized collaborating with other newspapers such as *The Exonian* at Phillips Academy Exeter — work *The Phillipian* has done in the past.

"We used to do joint surveys with *The Exonian*, so we would have stats from Exeter and Andover. I thought these are just really interesting things to have [and that] this is really interesting data to collect. Another aspect of it is that we used to cover events going on

at other schools and I feel like that awareness and that connection has faltered. As high school newspapers who are all involved with student journalism, I think it's pretty important that we stay aware of each other," said Xu.

Another initiative to be rolled out soon is *The Phillipian's* upcoming app. Former Executive Digital Editor Heyon Choi '25 spoke on CXLVII's work on the app over the fall term, specifically crediting former Managing Editor Tianyi Gu '25 for spearheading the app's creation.

"Tianyi put together an app for *The Phillipian* that will be launched very, very soon. I remember mentioning wanting to make a *Phillipian* app in my own Executive Digital Editor application, but I had no idea how to approach making an app whatsoever: And Tianyi did. He's an amazing coder. He's incredibly skilled and he was able to make that. I think that's a really big accomplishment and a milestone for CXLVII," said Choi.

Continuing with initiatives started by CXLVII, Gu com-

mented on how the new Upper Management can continue *The Phillipian's* efforts to improve relationships with faculty and administration.

"I think one of the areas that our board could have improved upon is being able to pursue certain articles and being able to work with the Head of School's Office more. I think one of the areas that we struggled with... was getting interviews, for example, with [Raynard] Kington, our Head of School, and being able to get things from his perspective. We didn't really have that much communication with him throughout. We only interviewed him once throughout the entire time... My hope for the next board is to be able to increase that in collaboration," said Gu.

Micheal Kawooya '26, former Commentary Associate and current Editor in Chief, noted the importance of *The Phillipian's* duty to represent students beyond the Newsroom in a fair and unbiased way. Kawooya shared avenues towards achieving these goals.

"I'm thinking about ways we can make it easier for writers to join the paper. The way we currently do things asks a lot of writers to reach out themselves, [and] they have to forge their own path. We could make it easier for writers to join, so we get more diverse stories and backgrounds," said Kawooya.

Former Sports Associate and current Executive Editor Kate Rodgers '26 elaborated on CXLVIII's upcoming initiative to promote diversity and inclusion, particularly emphasizing this year's Black History Month.

"Black History Month is coming up and... we're hoping to do a lot in focusing on

Continued on A5, Column 1

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## Brace Fellow Alice He '25 Explores China's One-Child Policy

AZUL CABRERA & CHRISTIAN ESTRADA

When Brace Fellow Alice He '25 returned to China two years ago, nearly everyone she met assumed that she and her sister were friends instead of siblings. Inspired by this experience, He examined China's one-child policy in her presentation, titled "The Ban on Babies: How the One-Child Policy Transformed Gender Norms in China," on January 27 in Abbot Hall.

Introduced in 1980 to curb China's growing population, the one-child policy limited most Chinese families to having one child each. He discussed how this policy affected women, compounding the preference for male children and resulting in skewed gender ratios.

"Overall, much of the psychological and physiological



A. BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN

Alice He '25 discussed the impact of China's one-child policy on gender dynamics.

consequences of the policy were shouldered by women. The brutal handling of women's bodies in the name of enforcement demonstrated how officials often valued population targets over the care of both the women and the children's health in the

country," said He.

He continued, "Women were given one chance to do it right and birth a son. This placed lots of pressure on women and

Continued on A5, Column 1

## Blue Plate Reformed as Fireside Chats



COURTESY OF AINSLEY MULDOON

Students joined Santiago Morgan, Instructor in Mathematics, for a Blue Plate dinner at his house in 2022.

### STAFF REPORT

The Dean of Students Office and Student Council (STUCO) has reformed and renamed the Blue Plate program. Now dubbed Fireside Chats, the program invites all campus adults to host an informal conversa-

tion or activity that any student can sign up for. As of now, there is no limit on the number of students who can sign up for a Fireside Chat with a faculty member.

Introduced in 2019, Blue

Continued on A5, Column 4

## Update on the Cell Phone Policy Task Force

SELENE PARK & VEDANT BAJAJ

The Cell Phone Policy Task Force, introduced to the community in Fall 2024, has officially been established. The goals of the task force, composed of both students and faculty, include building a community where students can focus academically, feel safe and supported, and connect with others. Co-chaired by Susan Tsao Esty and David Gardner, Dean and Assistant Dean of Students and Residential Life, the task force is composed of seven students and seven faculty members.

The task force is divided into three sections with various tasks assigned to each group: cell phone usage, broader policies across peer schools, and developmental research. The

groups have begun completing their tasks as well as creating future plans. Gardner explained how the group structured their work.

"Early on, we divided into three subgroups to tackle different aspects of the work. One group has focused on understanding current cell phone practices, uses, culture, and needs at Andover... Another group has examined cell phone policies at over a dozen other boarding schools in the Northeast... The third group has explored current research on the intersections of education, smartphone use, and adolescent development and well-being," wrote Gardner in an email to *The Phillipian*.

Other schools, such as Deerfield, have implemented policies including prohibiting students from bringing their phones to class, freshman locking up their phones at 10:30

P.M., and requiring lowerclassmen to keep their phones outside their rooms during study hours. Xavier Moran '26, a member of the task force, highlighted the task force's outreach to other school representatives.

"[In the past few months], we have reached out to multiple other schools like Choate, [Phillips] Exeter [Academy], St. John's Preparatory, Brooks, and Deerfield. We reached out to their students and their Head of Schools to get information about what policies they might have and what part of the process they are at if they don't have one and if they're planning to make one. We've reached out to them, and then we've also sent out surveys to students and teachers regarding their opinions on cell phones," said Moran.

Moran continued, "An interesting thing we found at these other schools is after the first

### CELL PHONE TASK FORCE UPDATE

The task force consists of three sub-groups tackling different work aspects:

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| GROUP 1 | Study current cell phone use and culture at Andover                          |
| GROUP 2 | Survey cell phone policies at other Northeastern boarding schools            |
| GROUP 3 | Research effects of cell phone usage on education and adolescent development |

C. WANG/THE PHILLIPIAN

month or first couple weeks students had a mixed reaction to the policy, but then after a while the student body reacted positively to the change."

Gardner expressed his hopes

Continued on A5, Column 1

Commentary, A2

### Cultural Unity

In "The Space Race isn't About Space," Claire Bancroft '28 reflects on what the 'Space Race' can teach us about unity within diversity.

Eighth Page, A8

### Right Hand on Heart

A letter phrom the Oval Office.

Sports, B1

### Wrestling with Champions

This weekend, Andover hosted its 11th Annual Girls Wrestling Tournament, featuring Olympic Gold Medalist Erica Weibe.

Arts, B6

### Senior Soloist Recital

Read about the Senior Soloist Recital featuring Emily Wu '25 on voice, Brandon Fu '25 on clarinet, and Ellie Sun '25 on violin.

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Editorial

The Phillipian Charter

The Phillipian operates on the following principles:

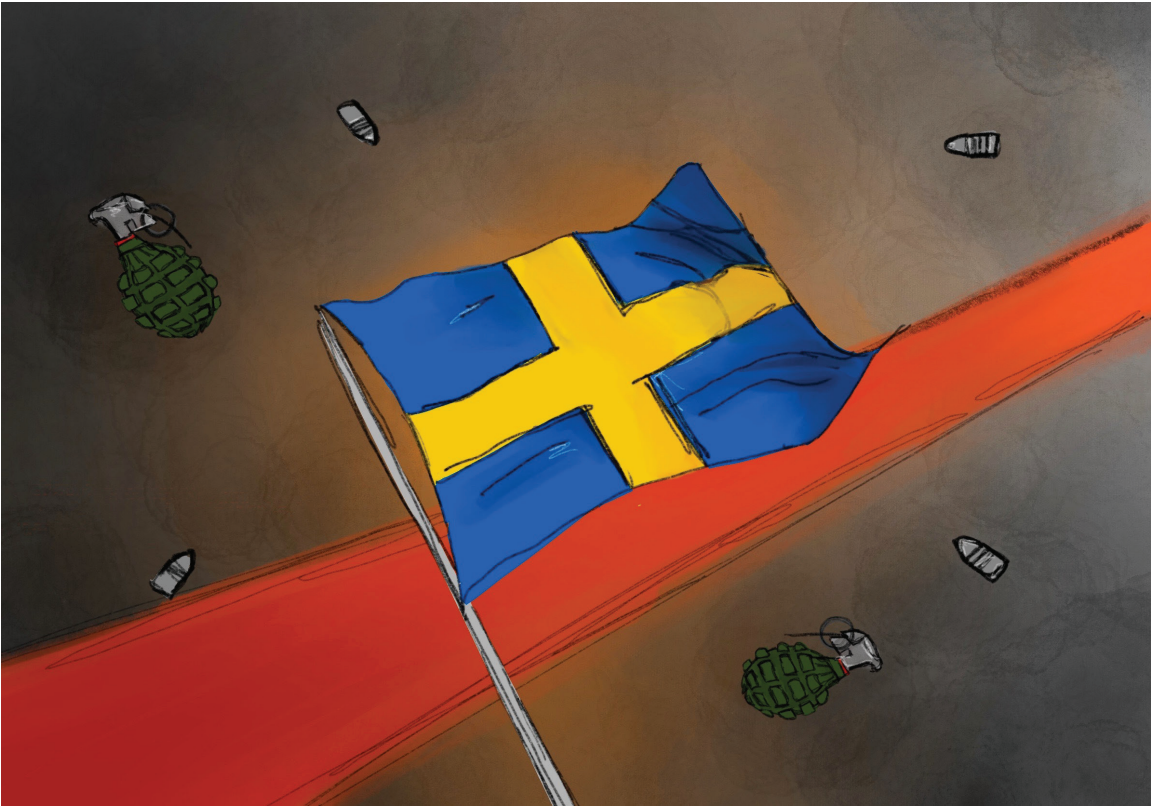
1. The Phillipian strives to maintain professional standards of accuracy, objectivity and fairness at all times.
2. Staff members have the right to report on and editorialize about all topics, events or issues, including those unpopular or controversial.
3. The Phillipian will not publish anything obscene, libelous, or detrimental to the immediate material and physical stability of the school.
4. The paper shall not be subjected to prior restraint, review or censorship.
5. Staff members have the obligation to learn and observe the legal and ethical responsibilities expected of them as practicing journalists.
6. The Editor in Chief assumes total responsibility for their publication.

The Perils of Political Neutrality

RANIA ALI-SVEDSÄTER



Political neutrality defines a nation's indifference to world affairs around them. Primarily, the neutral nation attempts to rationally navigate the political spectrum, prioritizing its unique national will over conflict and international deceit. Defining features of neutrality include, but are not limited to, abstention from war, and subsequently, the absence of bias for any relevant participant in the ongoing war or conflict. At first, neutrality appears ideal, ennobling the neutral nation with an equitable position to traverse conflict, and evading any potential dissentient towards their political decisions. This narrative casts a dualistic edge on neutrality, inferring its theoretical benefits that are often impossible to achieve. However, this lack of possibility within neutrality, albeit minor, births a sense of instability within national neutrality, portraying it as an unattainable goal yielding adverse effects and impacts. Despite its initial gain, neutrality has also proven to wreak havoc within many political interactions across the world, forcing a nation to eventually surrender its neutrality when placed at the forefront of conflict. Additionally, neutrality infers a lack of national responsibility, conveying the nation's inattentive contributions to the world stage. Perhaps, political neutrality does not cultivate as much merit as expected, instead forming a foolish enterprise constantly on the precipice



GEMMA PARK/THE PHILLIPIAN

of failure.

For centuries, Sweden's political neutrality has delineated pivotal boundaries within its foreign and domestic government affairs, imbuing a culture of impartiality across almost all areas of national life. Neutrality began after the nation's detrimental loss of territory during the Napoleonic wars, which characterized Napoleon's intense drive to power through attempted assertions of dominance over various European states and territories, occurring consistently towards the end of the nineteenth century. In 1814, Sweden considered their newfound inability to reassert recognition as a world power. Territorial loss proved calamitous for impressions of their strength and government efficiency. Due to the territorial loss, Sweden was unable to reassert its strength and government efficiency on the global stage. Consequently, the nation was forced to revise its political stance, leading to the birth of neutrality as a tactical alternative to its prior international power. In 1834, King Karl XIV John, the reigning monarch at the time, adjudicated neutral-

ity as an official political policy, targeting his novel aims toward the nation's disengagement from any of the burgeoning conflicts of Russia and Britain. Soon thereafter, neutrality instilled innumerable benefits: repairing the previous absences of Swedish soldiers on the domestic scale, and resolving various international ties that the war had severed. Moreover, public attitudes became heavily directed towards neutrality, crafting an efficient and practical mentality within Swedish culture, eventually leading to its general national credibility and prowess revered in modernity. Initially, neutrality achieved new heights of national development, considered a crucial constituent of Swedish society and politics. However, the rapid benefits of neutrality were eventually sheathed in detriment, due to the inevitable declension embroiled within the policy. The failure of Swedish neutrality began with the challenges of the Cold War, marking the infamous period of ideological tension in the aftermath of World War II between 1947-1989. Given the extent of American rejection

of the Soviet Union's Communist government, Sweden was faced with the choice between continuing undeterred neutrality or fostering prior relations with the United States. Ultimately, Sweden embarked on an insincere manipulation of its policies, by breaching its preordained parameters of neutrality by preserving a confidential liaison with the United States. Simply, the government believed that Sweden could not maintain their strength and stability if it were to maintain neutrality, contradicting acutely? With their earlier proclamations. Furthermore, the grand appeal of beneficial relations with the United States was beyond the restraint of Swedish politicians and thus justified their disposition of neutral thought. Additionally, propositions of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership had been prevalent since the Cold War, and Sweden's refusal to join had been crucial for their continued claims of neutrality. Notwithstanding, Sweden continued to deny their failed neutrality until the recent union with NATO on March 7, 2024, granting the nation greater

authority to form alliances with other nations for the betterment of international democratic stability. In a speech given by Sweden's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tobias Billström, delivered shortly after the nation's official union with NATO, it was stated that "Sweden's NATO accession is the culmination of a long farewell to the policy of neutrality and non-alignment," denoting the union as the conclusion of national neutrality. However, given Sweden's double standards of neutrality during the Cold War, it may be argued that the nation's neutrality ended long before, more so a product of its inevitable failures rather than its current and past applications. Arguably, the greatest dangers of neutrality lie within its idealistic qualities, constantly inferring desirable political possibilities that are often impossible for a nation to achieve. As evident with Sweden's failed neutral stance, neutrality cannot persist amongst the disparate international relations and conflicts that define the world today. Principally, some level of interference is inevitable from all countries, particularly those with a similar profile to Sweden regarding national resourcefulness, robustness and efficiency. In the face of international conflict, such attributes are highly attractive to help achieve urgent resolution and respective advantages, on the wider scope of global nations and the long-standing interactions between them. Potentially, Sweden's unique success and productivity may have caused its failure of neutrality, which could offer an outlet of justification for neutrality within a different national profile. Yet, as suggested above, the premise of this success was indeed directly granted by neutrality, forming the origin of its rise alongside subsequent

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CORRECTIONS:

The Sports article "Girls Swimming and Diving Captain: Valencia Zhang '25" was credited incorrectly. The author was Ashley Suh.

The Sports article "Girls Squash Faces First Loss of Season, Falling 3-4 Against Tabor Academy" was credited incorrectly. The authors were Chloe Park and Audrey Baeten-Ruffo.

The Sports article "Girls Squash Narrowly Triumphs Over Choate, Defeats Winsor, Extending Undefeated Streak" was credited incorrectly. The author was Haoyu Zhang.

The Sports article "Girls Hockey Wins 3 Games in 5 Days, Furthering Winning Streak" was credited incorrectly. The authors were Chloe Park and Vivien Valckx.

The Sports article "Boys Squash Coach John JR Roberts: Composure, Commitment, and Culture" was credited incorrectly. The author was Thiago Jollon.

The illustration for the Commentary article "Spotify, Stop Showing Me AI-Generated Music" should be credited to Amy Oku.

# Why Every Student Should Try Theater

JEANNIE KANG



K. MA/THE PHILLIPIAN

The stage became my second home at the age of seven. In pre-school, standing on stage in a non-menacing pirate costume, I envisioned the camera-shuttering parents as the stormy waves, and teachers as bloody-toothed sharks. Each time I raised a red rubber sword, the audience applauded—mostly the thrilled parents—and the teachers shouted out words of encouragement. I could be a princess trapped in a haunted castle one day, and a courageous warrior on another. As an overachieving kindergartener, standing on stage meant breaking free from the boundaries of myself. I was no longer just me, but a variety of characters who slightly resembled who I truly am.

Upon entering Middle School and joining more theater productions, the joy and comfort that came from guaranteed applause and praises soon subsided. As an actor, I was designed to please the harsh audience who would either fall asleep or begin scrolling on their phones if the first minute of the show did not sufficiently

grab their attention. The very first “official” show I acted in was “The Reflections,” an original production by my theater director and a mentor. I remember naively auditioning for the main character and ending up with one of the minor roles that did not have a designated name. Though performing during the show still brought up the inexplicable thrill of theater, my love for theater sprouted during all the processes that happened backstage. I learned the value of teamwork through working with (and sometimes arguing with) fellow ensemble members. My then-director served as my mentor throughout middle school and inspired me to explore other aspects of theater beyond acting, such as directing and scriptwriting. A barbecue feast after the final performance provided me with friends with whom I still share dozens of inside jokes. The beauty of theater lies in its ability to merge people of different interests together and appreciate each others’ talents. Actors listen to the directors, directors appreciate the crew members, and crew members support the actors. This unique chain of teamwork constructed by



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theater led me in my journey of collaborating with others from diverse backgrounds.

In the second year of middle school, I discovered that my interest lay beyond acting. I had always secretly admired my director, the emperor of the theater, who breathed life into a dead script. His dual identity as a scriptwriter further allowed him to produce dialogues, people, and stories that shock, inspire, and entertain the audience. This sense of admiration kickstarted my journey as a director-scriptwriter (similar to a singer-songwriter, but better!). After watching a documentary on “tiger parenting,” I

wrote and directed “The Door,” an original script on the definition of parental love. Emma, the main character of the play, regains a sense of self after escaping from her mom’s tyrannical household. From a random dream of a devil controlling me, I wrote “No Refunds,” a play with a plot of a girl selling her memories to a devil. The magic of being a director-scriptwriter is that you can craft a piece of art that is genuinely yours from top to bottom. You can choose the characters to bring to life, the stories to spotlight, and how those words are presented on stage. These experiences taught me the power of stories.

Regardless of whether they are fictional or not, narratives have a unique capacity to penetrate people’s hearts and allow them to view the world in a completely different way.

The beauty of theater does not offer itself to those unwilling to take risks, however. The burden of entertaining the audience and impeccably embodying a character often presses on me. An audience member’s mindless comment that they wasted their time on the show, the actors’ lack of concentration, the overwhelming anxiety before stepping into the lights: they can shred even the most courageous directors and actors apart. The risks exist, yet the reward of smiles on audiences’ faces, the thrill of shining on stage, and the joy of representing the under-represented bring me back to the stage once again.

Acting, directing, and scriptwriting craft work is not merely pleasing to the eye, but also touching to the heart. The bonds formed from months of rehearsals, the thrill gained from shining during the show, and the lessons learned after stepping down from the stage, allow us to embrace who we are and where we are headed. If you are uncertain how you are and how you aspire to become, dive into theater. After living out various, uniquely beautiful lives, you may find one that fits you just right.

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# The Space Race Isn’t About Space

CLAIRE BANCROFT



C. TANG/THE PHILLIPIAN

On July 16, 1969, millions watched as astronauts Michael Collins, Edwin ‘Buzz’ Aldrin, and Neil Armstrong launched into space aboard Apollo 11. Whether they were gazing at the rocket in person or glued to their small TV screens, people around the world felt a shared sense of wonder. For the United States, this mission was more than a scientific achievement—it became a defining moment of national pride and a symbol of humanity’s boundless potential.

The Space Race began after World War II when the United States and the Soviet Union began building rockets to use as long-range weapons. Although initially focused on military purposes, this endeavor soon turned into missile and rocket development for space exploration as well. Declaring the nation’s goal of landing a man on the moon, President John F. Kennedy challenged Americans and Soviets to compete to prove their technological superiority. The intense competition was deeply rooted in national identity. For both the United States and the Soviet Union, the Space Race became more than a battle of rockets; it became a reflection of the values, systems, and pride that defined each nation vying for a spot on the international stage.

The reason why the Space Race is so fascinating goes

much further than simply technological advancements or national identity; it was the way that science and emotions were able to intertwine with one another. Exploring space was not purely reliant on scientific knowledge and development, it hid the deeper meaning of nations defining themselves on a world stage, showing true power. Specific to the Space Race, the Moon landing was a defining milestone that allowed

As we come together,  
it becomes clear that  
respecting every  
person’s pride in  
their homeland is as  
important as celebrating  
our collective.

the US and Soviet Union to rise to the stage, asserting their values and visions for the future.

This intersection of national pride and technological progress offers valuable lessons for people today, especially in an increasingly diverse world. At a place like Andover, with students from all over the globe, it becomes more critical for us to understand and respect national identity. When looking back on the Space Race, we can be reminded of how national pride can be a double-edged sword. It can be a source of unity and strength, but it can also fuel competition and division.

National pride, when fostered with an awareness of the broader world, can bring people together and help them feel a sense of belonging to something larger than themselves. Just as the U.S. and the Soviet Union took pride in their space achievements, pride can be found in cultural heritage, national histories, and shared achieve-



BAILEY XU / THE PHILLIPIAN

ments. Yet, it is crucial that this pride does not evolve into arrogance or exclusion. In a diverse environment, cultural identity must coexist with respect and understanding for others. Celebrating the accomplishments of nations and cultures should not come at the expense of diminishing others.

At Andover, the complexity of national identity is brought up often. As we come together, it becomes clear that respecting every person’s pride in their homeland is as important as celebrating our collective achievements. This idea that unity within diversity is what makes us stronger ultimately reminds us of the shared potential within humanity.

Understanding national pride within a global context

does not diminish the importance of that pride, but rather enhances it. Just as America and the Soviet Union used the Space Race to define their place in the world, we too, can use our national identities to enrich our collective experience. The true beauty of the Space Race was not simply in each country’s tremendous technological advancements but in how the race allowed the world to reflect on the true potential of humankind, showing that even in our differences, we could accomplish great things not only for ourselves but for our humanity and generations to come. Especially with the recent 2024 Summer Olympics, each nation upheld its pride by competing in a variety of sports, but ultimately came together and enjoyed the ex-

perience, not just the final goal of winning.

As I reflect on these themes in a school where national character is celebrated in many forms, I am reminded of the importance of maintaining respect alongside pride. Just as the Moon landing was a shared achievement for all of humanity, we must approach our own identities with the same recognition: that our national pride is not better than others, but simply different, and that the collective spirit of respecting and learning from each other is what truly propels us forward.

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# Consensus Stress, Psychology’s Mess



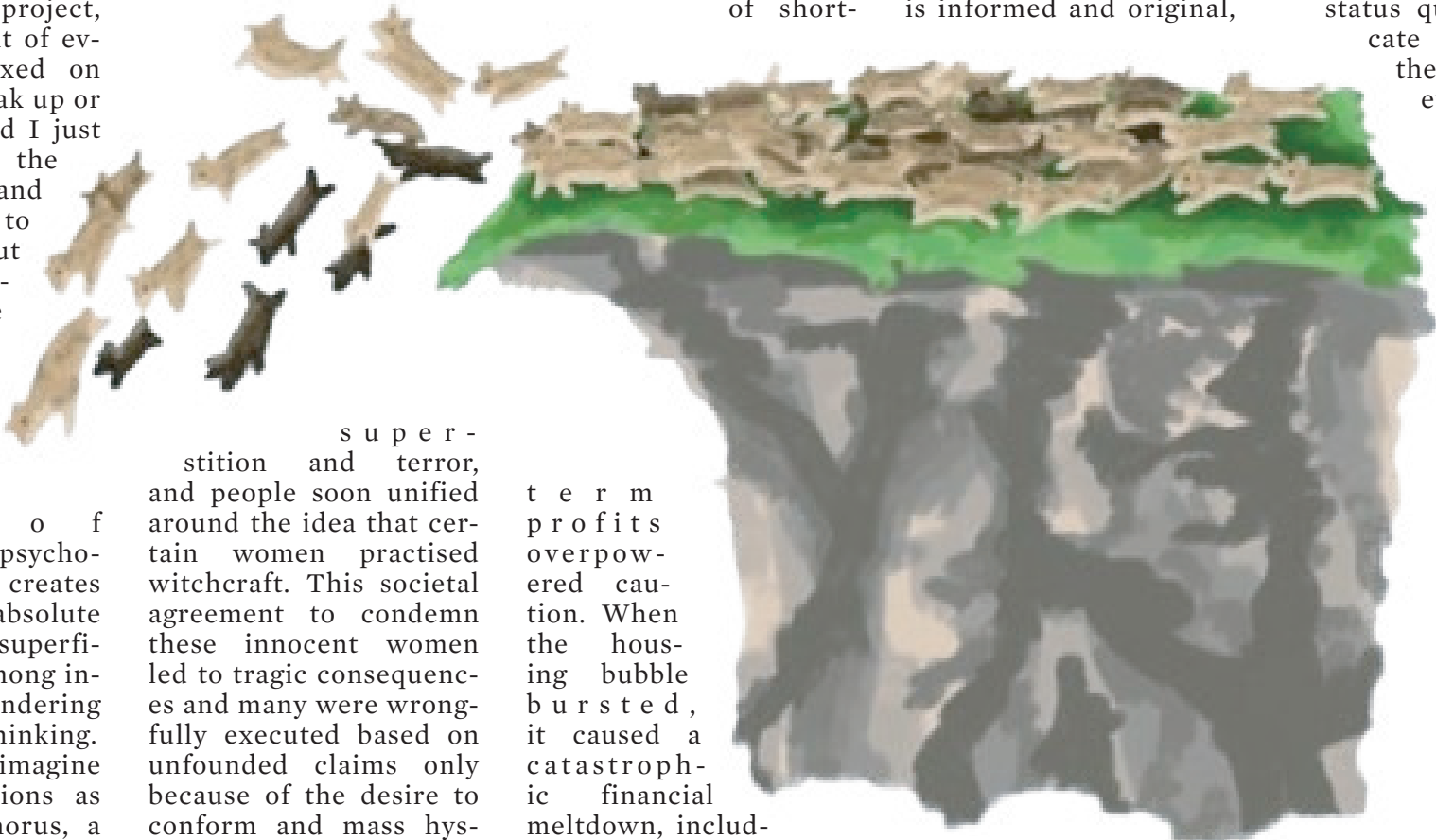
You’ve probably been in that moment—brainstorming for a group project, feeling the weight of everyone’s gaze fixed on you. Should I speak up or stay quiet? Should I just nod along with the crowd? Ideas fly, and everyone seems to be fired up about one particular approach. You are stuck and torn between voicing your true opinion and staying quiet to maintain harmony. The “illusion of consensus” is a psychological trap that creates a false belief in absolute truth, leading to superficial agreement among individuals and hindering genuine critical thinking. We often imagine unanimous decisions as a harmonious chorus, a unity where every voice blends into one. This idea can grip us like a siren’s song, tempting us with the comfort of community, belonging, and approval. But this desire for belonging can cloud our judgment. The closer

we inch toward unquestioned consensus, the shakier the ground beneath us becomes. The result? We might find ourselves swept up in a sea of concurrence, only to realise later that the shallow comfort of agreement led us to overlook deeper insights. Look at history, and you’ll see how the pressure to agree can shape entire societies. Consider the Salem witch trials (for the History 201 students). Accusations of witchcraft spread in an atmosphere of superstition and terror, and people soon unified around the idea that certain women practised witchcraft. This societal agreement to condemn these innocent women led to tragic consequences and many were wrongfully executed based on unfounded claims only because of the desire to conform and mass hysteria. Now, let’s bring this back to our original scenario. You might see potential flaws in the group’s choice, but the pull to conform feels overpowering. You might think, “If everyone else is on board, it should be

fine,” even as something within you stirs in dissent. This internal tug-of-war, like choosing to accuse even the innocent to fit in, mirrors the tension between staying true to ourselves and blending with the collective. Another one: Take the 2008 financial crisis as a prime example. Before its collapse, the financial world was driven by a seemingly unanimous belief: housing prices would always rise. Warnings about subprime mortgages were dismissed, and the group’s thinking of short-term profits overpowered caution. When the housing bubble burst, it caused a catastrophic financial meltdown, including the collapse of giant banks like Lehman Brothers. This crisis exposed the dangers of blind agreement and the devastating consequences of disregarding careful

analysis in favour of consensus. Unanimity often gives us a false sense of security, convincing us that widespread agreement equals correctness. But does it? This is the essence of “group-think” — when conformity suppresses critical thinking. Through the lens of the trolley problem and the pressure of consensus, we are invited to reflect on our own decision-making processes. Shouldn’t we consider whether every opinion and choice holds value, as long as it is informed and original, rather than simply conforming to achieve agreement? As we navigate academic and professional life, the decisions we

make don’t just shape our grades or outcomes; they define our integrity, our relationships, and who we are. So, next time you find yourself in a group setting, don’t let the comfort of consensus sweep you along without question. Dare to probe the assumptions underpinning the group’s choices — for those very assumptions could be the chains keeping you from uncovering a richer, more nuanced truth. Are you willing to remain passive in the face of collective opinion, or will you challenge the status quo and advocate for your authentic beliefs, even when it feels uncomfortable?



MIA WALKER / THE PHILLIPIAN

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# How Meritocracy Undermines Humanity



On a superficial level, the idea of meritocracy seems more or less ideal. A merit-based society sounds like an indubitably fair system, one in which the rewards of life — money, power, careers, etc. — are distributed on an even basis of skills and efforts. However, questions of whether it’s achievable or actually desirable are constant. There are many harmful nuances underlying the concept of meritocracy, starting with the fact that it wouldn’t necessarily reward people for their hard work. In fact, it

would more often reward citizens for external factors beyond anyone’s control. This may sound like a ludicrous statement because meritocracy is derived from the idea of replacing those external, uncontrollable factors with “merit.” But external and uncontrollable luck is so closely intertwined with society’s perception of “merit” that this wouldn’t be conceptually possible. There is a concept called the “birth lottery”: it’s the idea that the certain uncontrollable circumstances of one’s birth determines the bulk of their opportunities and privileges. Some individuals are gifted with certain genetic advantages, others grow up in homes that nurture them into being hardworking or driven while others don’t get the same opportunities. Sometimes two people are even born with similar amounts of privilege and merit yet there are long-shots and coincidences that carve an exclusive path for one, while the other is left in the dust. It cannot be denied that this perpetuates inequality: there will be an unfathomably stark contrast between the opportunity offered to children born into poverty and children born into royalty. Thus, success and failure in a meritocracy would still be largely determined by luck. Another important factor to think about in a hypothetically “merit”-based society are per-

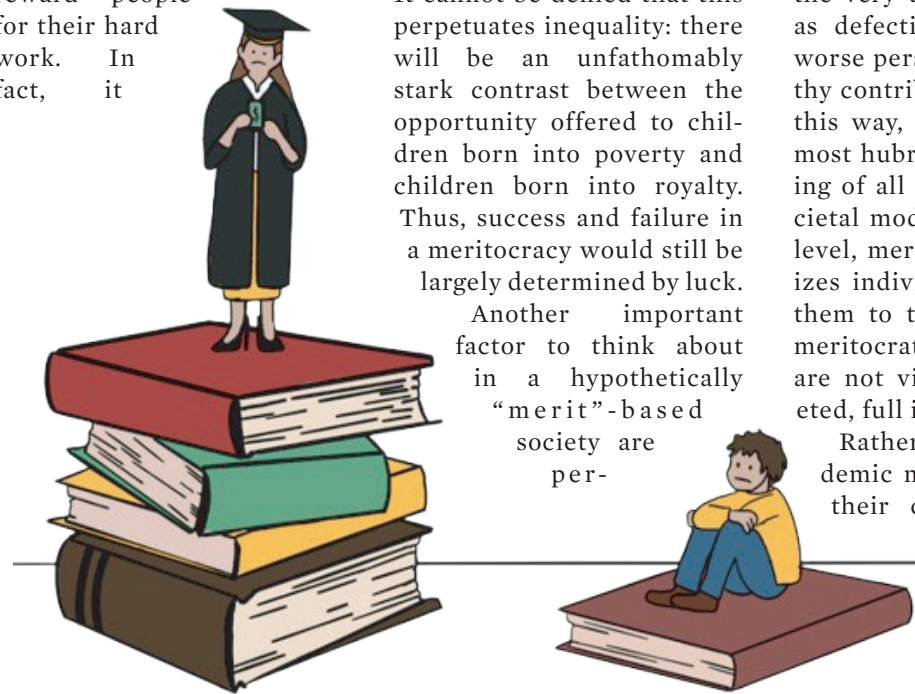
sonal ideals. Meritocracy would inevitably enforce a uniform and complete lack of work-life balance, something certain people will simply never feel particularly compelled toward. The notion of what a life well-lived or well-“merited” is hard to define, often tying into individual, subjective perspectives of fulfillment. For some, merit may be derived from attaining lofty social status, wealth, or professional achievements. But others may find that high-quality life lies in contributing to their community, fostering close relationships, and putting a bigger emphasis on fun. While there is nothing objectively wrong with someone like this, in a meritocratic society, they would be alienated and undervalued. Meanwhile, those who have achieved the height of measurable success will be given the license to perceive themselves as productive, competent, and superior humans. Essentially, everyone except those who have clawed their way up to the very top will be viewed as defective; lesser than, a worse person and a less worthy contributor to society. In this way, meritocracy is the most hubristic and self-serving of all the ideological societal models. On a personal level, meritocracy dehumanizes individuals by reducing them to their “merit”. In a meritocratic society, people are not viewed as multifaceted, full individuals. Rather, they are academic machines. They are their careers. A set of attributes and achievements. In a meritocracy, people are

alone in their responsibility for their success or failure. This puts people under constant pressure, holding them accountable for their place on the societal ladder, wherever they are on it. This is, quite frankly, depressing, and puts people in a perpetual state of psychological strain: those who are high-ranked in society could eventually be led to chronic stress and eventual burnout. In 2021, it was reported by the “APA” that 61 percent of high-achieving professionals reported feeling overwhelmed, with 26 percent of them describing it as burnout. And in 2024, a “Mercer” study reported a staggering 80 percent of employees were at risk of burnout, with research showing that depression rates among CEOs nearly double the national average. Meritocracy prioritizes alienation and competition over collaboration and thus reduces relationships to transactional things, formed based on someone’s accomplishment-based value. I say all of this but I am a Freshman at a school that very much perpetuates meritocracy. At Andover, a lot of students will do practically anything to decorate their LinkedIn profile — join extracurriculars they don’t even like, stress over grades, sports, clubs, to an obsessive degree — and let’s face it, many of Andover kids are also immensely well-connected. A lot of people here have parents who are professors at Ivy leagues or successful doctors or whatever other glittery corporate job it may be, and there is nothing wrong with that — it’s just what they were born into.

There’s simply some injustice that comes in where other kids who are just as driven and intelligent may not have been born into the same, or even remotely similar, circumstances and lack the same connections. Another fundamental problem with meritocracy is that there is still a very narrow understanding of what success is at Andover—most are striving for the same unrealistic ideal of living, and if someone wants to stray a little bit from that lifestyle, they’re dumb. Lazy. Some of their peers might even question how or why they’re at Andover in the first place. The meritocratic system of Andover is not only toxic and unjust, but it forces students to conform to one extremely restrictive mold of success and shames anyone who dares try to step out. So, while there is nothing inherently wrong with striving for personal success in a traditional manner, getting into a good university, getting a good career, and earning good money — meritocracy is a deeply harmful construct. It allows for only a very narrow pathway of success and merit, reducing people to mere measures of achievement and disregarding the other values of a meaningful life. As an ideological model, meritocracy promotes an arrogant, self-serving worldview that disregards the importance of community, morality, and the varied ways in which individuals contribute to society. Meritocracy is a harmful and dehumanizing system that strips people of value and meaning.

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ANNABELLE LANGHORST / THE PHILLIPIAN



# CXLVIII Shares Goals and Excitement for Upcoming Tenure

Continued from A1, Column 5

the history of Black History Month at Andover and going into that more. I was also thinking of maybe possibly working with the archives to do a little research on black students at Andover in the past and making our Black History Month content a little more intentional and thorough,” said Rodgers.

As a weekly facilitator and editor of *The Phillippian’s* editorial, Former Managing Editor Alice He ’25 explained how the editorial brings the views of the student body to the forefront of campus discussion, an aspect of *The Phillippian* where diversity is particularly important.

“It’s one of the very few places on campus and in *The Phillippian* also that is a place intended to voice the student body’s beliefs. It’s a representation of the student voice. It’s a way to communicate with the administration and faculty who read the newspa-

per what we want, what we’re concerned about, [and] what we notice. [We hold] this special space for students to share their abilities and their opinions and their experiences in a way that is entirely uncensored and truly representative of what we truly feel,” said He.

Valencia Zhang ’25, former Chief Financial Officer, pointed out another particular area of focus for the new board: general engagement with the paper that drives subscription sales. Noting that it will increase engagement and readership, in addition to being a key tenet of journalism, Zhang encouraged the new board to speak up about contentious issues.

“[There] was some decrease in engagement with the paper, from not necessarily the student body, but also from parents. Usually we sell subscriptions to parents but we found it to be a little more difficult this year to engage parents with the paper. This wasn’t directly to address this problem, but I think by writing more ed-

itorials that are risky, [for example] most recently we wrote an editorial directly towards the Head of School calling for an increase in engagement, we can really increase engagement with the paper, and encourage more people to read it,” said Zhang.

The business section is also looking to expand its modes of advertisement, a key component of *The Phillippian’s* revenue. Angela Zhao ’26, former Business Associate and current Chief Financial Officer, outlined her overarching strategy to broaden *The Phillippian’s* ad portfolio, highlighting a focus on digital advertisements in the app alongside using alumni connections.

“Something that we are working on right now is expanding advertisement opportunities, because if you know the business section well, the main revenue we run on is advertisements in *The Phillippian*. Most of those we have now are from local businesses downtown that you can go down to. You reach out to them, and

then you sell an ad. What I wrote about [in my application] was expanding that to more digital opportunities. We have a new app coming up, [so] exploring if we can reach outside of local Andover, and just finding different forms, maybe communicating to alumni, but really establishing more [business] connections,” said Zhao.

In line with *The Phillippian’s* increased digital presence, former Graphics Editor and current Executive Digital Editor Abby Zhu ’26 spoke on her desire to add to *The Phillippian’s* digital content through video features on social media, expressing her hopes that it will increase student engagement with the paper.

“That’s a pretty big consensus with all of us on [Upper Management] right now, really utilizing Instagram and putting out a lot of content, not just Look of the Week or the What’s in Our Paper videos, but also just maybe doing sneak peeks of the editorial or other breaking news articles and doing more short form

videos. We did the Zendaya and Robert Pattinson video, and that got a lot of engagement, obviously because we had the celebrities, but it was still really fun,” said Zhu.

Reflecting on his path to becoming a current Managing Editor, former Sports Associate Theo Wei ’26 offered some advice. He emphasized the importance of maintaining an open mindset and making the most of every opportunity.

“I think everything that you do, you shouldn’t take lightly... I feel like what you put into *The Phillippian* is what you’ll get out of it, and it’s really fulfilling, even before becoming UM, just making a bunch of connections and just learning more about journalism in and of itself is really great. And some other advice I would give [is] always be willing to learn and have an open mindset when it comes to journalism,” said Wei.

## He Explores Effect of Policy on Female Agency and Discrimination

Continued from A1, Column 3

mothers, who sometimes committed suicide or were divorced by their husbands if they failed to bear a son. It also meant terrible consequences for the daughters under the policy, especially in rural areas... Many baby girls were abandoned and killed, and in some circumstances mothers who did keep their daughters internalized the oppression, and resented their daughters for being born.”

In addition to examining the negative impacts of the one-child policy, He also shed light on some unexpected benefits that arose, explaining how the policy promoted female agency in certain parts of China.

“Like much of history, the one-child policy was again not black or white, and there were certain effects of empowerment and gender equality that resulted from it. One example of it is employment and higher social status with women, in Xiangzhou, a province categorized as rural or urban... A staggering 96 percent of women said that they believed that the policy’s family planning increased their ability to work and access job opportunities, which raised their income as well,” said He.

Attendee Jasjit Hargun ’27

described how the presentation changed his perception of the one-child policy. Appreciating that He did not only focus on the negative effects of the policy, Hargun expressed that he discovered the topic was more nuanced than he had thought.

“One of the main points was that nothing is entirely good or bad. For example, the one-child policy caused trauma and loss, but it also led to improved education and job opportunities for the girls who were kept... Originally, I just thought the one-child policy was bad and short-sighted. I thought, with hindsight, there wouldn’t have been much risk of overpopulation, so I felt it was short-sighted. But then, as I mentioned earlier, it’s not that I now think [the policy] was fully good; it’s just that I don’t think it was completely bad anymore,” said Hargun.

Thao Pham ’25, another attendee, commented on the chronological arrangement of He’s presentation. She praised He’s organization, as it helped her understand the presentation and navigate such a complex topic.

“I thought Alice framed the presentation really well. I liked how she went in almost a chronological order, the information really built on itself. You have the beginning of the child

boom, when people were encouraged to have children, and the fear of lack of [children]. It really tells a story about the historical underlings that also impacted the decision for why China had that policy in the first place, and as she moved on she went to the modern day about how women are grappling with this history and the very existence of this policy in China today. So that was just a really comprehensive way to organize a presentation, [and] I thought that it was delivered really well,” said Pham.

Reflecting on her presentation, He aimed to combat the misconception that Americans live in a bubble. She emphasized the importance of raising awareness about and learning from issues in different countries around the world.

“My main point is to have greater awareness of the policies and laws in different countries, and how we don’t exist in a bubble of our own western world [because] there’s a lot of other countries and histories that we can learn from. [I want to] use that history to inform how we think about the policies and controversies that are happening in our own worlds [and] in our own lives that might influence our own bodies,” said He.

## Fireside Chats to Debut in Spring

Continued from A1, Column 5

Plate provided an annual opportunity for a faculty member and a group of up to eight students to organize a meal at a location of their choice. Each person had a budget of 20 dollars funded by STUCO.

Fireside Chats, with a budget of 40 dollars per group, are designed for snacks, not meals, and no longer allow faculty members to choose the group of students they are dining with. Nate Liang ’25, current Student Body Co-President, described the Fireside Chat program and how it would build upon the foundations of Blue Plate.

“This year, with Fireside Chats, teachers will open their homes or open their common room, or even go to a restaurant... If you’re interested in connecting with that faculty, pull up, swing by, get some food, meet them, meet some new friends. [Also], you’re also unburdened by time constraints... For Fireside Chats the time is [around] two to three hours, so students can come by and leave as they please, and can also meet other faculty,” said Liang.

Liang continued, “The idea is that there will be multiple Fireside Chat sessions around the year so it won’t be a one-and-done experience. If you don’t know the faculty and go to a Blue Plate program, it’s a fleeting experience. We’re hoping that with Fireside Chats, you can meet a ton of campus adults that you weren’t able to connect with outside of class.”

Aya Murata, Assistant Dean of Students and Residential Life, explained that Fireside Chats were established to give students and adults who might not already know each other an opportunity to build new connections.

“The previous Blue Plate program was predicated on a group of students (who already knew each other) to ask an adult (who they presumably already knew — e.g. a classroom teacher, an advisor, a coach) to share a meal. The Student Council felt like these kinds of bonds are already quite strong so they were looking for ways to create a means to expand relationships between students and adults... On a practical side, since the Blue Plate program was for a meal [versus] Fireside Chats are for a snack/dessert, we are able to include more people in the Fireside Chats model because it isn’t as expensive — the goal is

really to include as many adults and students as possible in this program,” wrote Murata in an email to *The Phillippian*.

Along with Fireside Chats, STUCO is planning on organizing a school-wide dinner in the spring to allow students across grades to meet. With assigned seating and mandatory attendance, the all-school dinner offers another opportunity for students to connect with others from all parts of campus, according to Liang.

Liang noted that while STUCO initially planned Fireside Chats for the fall, the Dean of Students Office ultimately decided to launch the program in the spring due to budgeting and scheduling considerations. This timing change also influenced the decision to replace Blue Plate rather than run both programs simultaneously.

“The Student Council came up with the idea for Fireside Chats. Originally, we were planning it for the fall, which is why the Fireside [idea] came about. Blue Plates usually [happen] in winter. Because of the timing, the Dean of Students ultimately decided that it was a good idea to do Fireside Chats in the spring instead. It wasn’t originally our [STUCO] idea that Fireside Chats would replace Blue Plates, that really was more of a budgeting issue stemming from the Dean of Students,” said Liang.

Mia Isacson ’26 shared her concerns about the shift from Blue Plate to Fireside Chats. While she acknowledged that grabbing a snack could serve a similar purpose, she expressed hesitation about the new format, noting that she would prefer to strengthen existing relationships with teachers rather than meet new ones in a structured setting.

“I did [a] Blue Plate meal last year, but I think you could get the same thing from just going to get a snack... I don’t really see the appeal of having to connect with a bunch of different teachers though. The concept of Fireside Chats would be that I have to sign up with teachers that I don’t know very well to meet them but I’d rather connect with a teacher I already know on a deeper level. Doing a Fireside Chat with an adult I haven’t really connected with before sounds intimidating,” said Isacson.

## Task Force Announces Pilot Programs

Continued from A1, Column 5

for more students to get involved in building a policy that is well-informed and widely favored. He expanded on the next steps that the task force plans to take, which will be more open to broader student opinion.

“There are several ways for the school community to get involved! Now that we have gathered our first round of data and insights, our next big step is to develop and test pilot programs for the spring. These pilots, along with the upcoming student focus groups, will allow us to gather additional feedback and data in the context of Andover. Students can participate in upcoming focus groups or join one of the spring pilot programs,” wrote Gardner.

Niki Tavakoli ’27, another member of the task force, not-

ed the importance of students having a role on the task force. She reflected on its overall goal of incorporating student input to help develop a policy that builds a better learning community.

“I would say that the reason for me, and probably a lot of other students, on the task force why we joined is that there is going to be a policy. No matter what, there will be a policy of some sort. I think that it is better if we have the opportunity to be a part of deciding what that is... Our goal as students isn’t to ban cell phones. We’re [here] to make sure that the policy serves all students,” said Tavakoli.

While the task force aims to develop a balanced phone policy, some students outside the group have concerns about the impacts it may have. Edward Zhang ’27 shared his thoughts

on the potential limitations a policy could set on the students.

“I am just worried that [the task force] may overstep boundaries and take away more than they should. If they start taking away the right to use your phone I guess that is kind of bad if you need to do something like calling your parents, or do other important stuff... I am not really sure if the school should be the one who is controlling cell phone usage. Because the point of going to this school is that you have your independence. We want to keep that,” said Zhang.

*Editor’s Note: Niki Tavakoli is a News Staff Writer at The Phillippian*

## Cristina Henríquez Discusses Panama Canal and Recent Book

KRISTEN MA & NIKI TAVAKOLI

Cristina Henríquez, author of “The Great Divide,” gave a fireside chat titled “The Panama Canal and Histories Beyond Our Borders” last Friday in the Cochran Chapel. Henríquez’s talk touched on many points during the student-led panel and was followed by a reading from her most recent book.

Henríquez spoke to Andover students about the power of novels, asserting the distinction of fiction writing from other forms of art. She highlighted how learning about different characters can help one to empathize with others.

“Fiction gives you entry into

someone else’s consciousness and that is so important. The act of identifying with somebody else, moving into their consciousness, especially if it’s somebody who is not like you, can be really powerful. By the time you finish reading the book, you look up and you have practiced a skill that will serve you in the world,” said Henríquez.

Henríquez also mentioned “The Great Divide” specifically, which tells the story of those who lived and labored on the Panama Canal. She elaborated on why she chose the topic, and her connection to the Panama Canal.

“I grew up going to the Panama Canal and I didn’t know anything about the history, but as I got older I started thinking I wanted to write a novel about

it. I started researching it, and I just discovered everything that was actually left out of the story, which was mostly Panamanians and the people who actually worked on it. I wanted to write a book that reflected on them and centered [on] them,” said Henríquez.

Max Langhorst ’25 was intrigued by Henríquez’s writing style. He commented on her use of a variety of characters and perspectives to tell the story of “The Great Divide,” and felt inspired by her writing technique.

“I don’t think I’ve ever read a historically oriented book that has that many perspectives. I feel like that’s a great way to try to appreciate the whole scope of what’s happening... It had lots of different perspectives... I was thinking about how I could use

that in my own writing, and how that might be a really interesting way to write a historical novel when most textbooks you see are from one perspective, instead of from a lot of individual stuff,” said Langhorst.

Owen Huang ’27 brought up Henríquez’s characters, whom he believed closely represented human values and experiences. By creating such relatable characters, he noted how she was able to expand the story and tell it using her own creative voice.

“Something I thought was good about the way she presented it was that all these characters had relatable experiences. They may have had a tough time with something or they are holding a grudge against someone, not talking to them for six months. All of her characters have very

human problems that you see a lot. She’s using that as a way to also tell her story of the Panama Canal,” said Huang.

Sean Niu ’25, who was recommended to attend the talk by his English teacher, remembered how Henríquez’s immersive writing techniques were able to pull him directly into the story, helping him to feel as though he were actually at the Panama Canal as it was being completed.

“[My English teacher] said it would be a great opportunity for us to further immerse ourselves into the history of Central America. One of my main takeaways was how immersive it was, how the author was able to transport everyone in the chapel to the Panama Canal and give us a history on what was going on as it was being built,” said Niu.

# 10 Questions With Lisa Joel

REPORTING BY ADELYNE LIU & SAKETH LINGISETTY

*Lisa Joel is the Director of Athletics, Head Coach of the Girls Varsity Soccer (GVS), faculty advisor for Relay for Life, and a complimentary house counselor in Alumni House. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, running half marathons, and exploring the mountains.*

**What is your favorite moment coaching Girls Varsity Soccer?**

What was really special about this year is that every week, and I guess arguably almost every day, that group of players came out onto the field at Graves. We love Graves. It's really special to us. There's a long history on Graves Field, and they [train] so hard together every day as individuals, through so many stresses that people don't see. People see game days and they see game results, but all the beautiful things we did on the field, all the beautiful results, all the intense relationships, those were the result of the days and hours that we spent on the field or off the field together that no one sees... We beat two teams that had undefeated records across the [region] — Nobles and Worcester. We were their only losses... That's why I said to the team after, I hope for the rest of their lives, they find something that they care about so deeply, that they're willing to do all that they can and everything they can for themselves and each other through the good and the bad, because that's what happened with GVS in a very special way this year.

**How was your experience running the Boston Marathon?**

Shortly after college, [because] I loved competitive things, I actually ran the Boston Marathon. I'd never thought about running a marathon. In February, before the marathon, a friend of mine was training, [and] got injured and so, she transferred her number to me. I ran for Brigham and Women's Hospital, so I was a charity runner. Until the day I ran Boston, I [had] never done anything more than half marathons. I remember the time I went to our cross country coach at Andover... John Stableford, who's a legendary cross country coach here, [and] I'm sure he doesn't even remember, but I never forgot this. He said [that] if you can run a half marathon, your body knows how to run a full marathon. So I trusted him, and it worked out pretty well. I had a great time, and it was really incredible to be part of that very, very special community of runners.

**What do you enjoy doing for fun or relaxation?**

I love cooking. I grew up in an Italian household, a three generation Italian household. I had an Italian grandfather who was actually the primary cook in the house. I love everything about how food, cooking, and culture brings people together. When you're Italian, that's really central to many homes. People are sometimes surprised that I enjoy cooking. I don't get to do it enough because I work a lot and the type of cooking I want



E. LIU/THE PHILLIPIAN

to do is all day cooking, starting in the morning and spending time with family and friends... I love pasta primavera, [and] making fresh pesto. Anything Italian I'd like to make it for you. I like making homemade dressings. I like baking. I love making muffins for friends. Sometimes I get up at five in the morning to make banana chocolate chip muffins or pumpkin muffins. I just really love cooking for other people, and when you cook, people can come together and you can sit around and enjoy that.

**What's your favorite place to travel to?**

I don't travel to a lot of countries. I don't get out of the country much, but I love going to the mountains. Anywhere I can go [where] I can be in the mountains is where I want to be. That's where I feel happiest. A few years ago, I had the very good fortune to [go to Wyoming for]... a ten day wilderness expedition [that] was completely offline. It was a leadership trip with executives from around the world. I was the only person in education. I was the only person from New England. We were [in the wilderness for] ten days. It rained torrentially for most of those days. We were at 11,000 feet. We

were cooking in the wilderness, sleeping in the wilderness. It was some of the happiest days of my life... To be with a group of people that your survival depends on, [and] to also understand physically and mentally that you can be challenged and overcome challenges individually, but even more collectively working together.

**What is something about yourself that you wish others knew?**

I wish people knew that while I love everything about the excitement and the fast pace and the full life of Andover... I wish people knew that I seek a quiet, simple life. I want people to know that the impact [and] the legacy I hope I leave behind was making the spaces I existed in happier, more joyful, or fuller for people. The way in which you have to model that is slowing down and having quieter times, [and] more communal moments. It's sort of this imbalance here for me because I kind of go, go, go. I cherish the things that are actually really slow and, maybe less visible... I'm considered a person who has a lot of high energy, a lot of capacity to juggle a lot, but I wish things were simpler.

**What drew you to become a Teaching Fellow in Physical Education and Athletics at Andover?**

Oh my gosh, that was over 30 years ago. I was a student athlete in college, and one of my teammates, her stepfather at the time, was the Director of Athletics at Andover. She let me know about an opportunity in the athletics department. I was coming out of college having played three sports, and there was an opportunity for me to come work and coach and stay in athletics. That [played] a big role in my college experience.

**What is your main goal for Andover's athletics program?**

I want everyone to see the athletic department in a more inclusive light. Even for me, as a woman in sport and a woman who was born right around the passing of Title IX, athletics has often been really exclusive, and a lot of people don't see themselves in these spaces in positive ways. A goal I've always had is that our program in the broadest sense is athletics for all, and athletics broadly defined. What I want is that everyone has a positive experience and recog-

nizes the importance of movement in their long term life. Everyone's athletic career, quite frankly, is going to come to an end. For many, it comes to an end when they finish high school. But what we want is to establish a mindset and a routine of moving and being with others that really makes people well.

**What is your go-to pre-game song or chant?**

Hamilton's one of my [top Spotify artists], it's very random for me. I got a lot of Hamilton going on, and then I've got a lot of Fleetwood Mac. I'm really a product of the eighties. I like a little bit of pick-me-up music. I listened to Beyoncé and Miley Cyrus to exercise too, but I normally listen to whatever GVS has on the playlist.

**What is the 'championship' culture that you aim to nurture in the sports you coach?**

It's really hard to be a champion, right? I always say this, I'm a deeply competitive person. I love to compete well. I always say to my players, we can't control the results. What we can control is the attitude we bring to training, the energy that we bring to the game, game day, the focus we bring... What it means to be part of a champion culture is to bring a champion attitude every day, because I actually think we grow the most when we fail. We grow the most when an individual has an injury and they have to be sidelined. Then they have to figure out, how am I a champion teammate? I have to figure out how to be a champion coach when our team is tired or when we lose... Team's records at the end of a season are maybe just part of the story, but what kids are walking away from is understanding more about themselves, what it means to be part of a team, how you succeed with humility. That to me, all those things, that's what it is to be a champion.

**What is one piece of advice you would give to athletes?**

Find the joy. These are some of the best days of your lives. Being able to play and compete in the sport that you love is not always easy, and sometimes it's just downright hard and frustrating. Part of being an athlete is [to] put yourself out there to lose, and there's no athlete out there who doesn't lose. Sometimes what we enjoy most is just playing hard, competing, failing, and dusting [ourselves] off, and [doing] that over and over again. Find joy and not stress in it. I want people to love, find a passion, [and] chase after it, knowing part of that will be some disappointment, but it will change your life. That's my hope.

# Andover’s CIO Kirsten Glantz Speaks on Investment Strategies

CHRISTIAN ESTRADA  
& JENNA LIANG

Kirsten Glantz, Andover’s Chief Investment Officer (CIO), spoke to students about the academy’s \$1.4 billion endowment during a student panel hosted by the Student Council (STUCO) and Women in Finance (WIF). Held in the Tang Institute, the event focused on the endowment’s role in funding about 45 percent of Andover’s operating budget.

The Investment Committee (IC), which oversees the school’s asset allocation and approved recommended investments, meets at least four times a year and is composed of former trustees, charter trustees, alumni trustees, trustees emeriti, as well as a few non-trustee alumni. During the panel, Glantz explained how nearly half of the school’s operating budget comes from the endowment’s roughly five percent annual draw. She highlighted her focus on endowment investment to support the school’s mission and achieve strong returns.

“My job is to focus on investing the [endowment] portfolio more than the school’s budgeting. The fact that the endowment supports a lot of financial aid and a lot of excellence in programming that schools without such assets don’t have also makes it a very compelling mission... Our last fiscal year return was 10.4 percent which was for the 12 months ending June 30, 2024 and that was a pretty good return compared to many larger

endowments,” said Glantz.

One of the IC’s main focuses is ensuring the endowment’s long-term sustainability while also keeping up with inflation, particularly the average three percent annual rise in costs associated with higher education. These measures help safeguard Andover’s financial future while supporting its operational and financial aid commitments. Arjun Shah ’25, who is currently taking macroeconomics, noted the value of seeing real-world examples of what he is studying.

“I’m taking macroeconomics with [Aly] Blakeney, [Instructor in History and Social Science], and she’s really into real-world examples of macroeconomics, so she wanted us to go to this panel to learn more about investment at Andover... I was interested in [how] the investment strategy differs from other private equity firms. In general, I thought the ways that Andover has safety measures in place to prevent too many losses, and protect the endowment and distribution of money within the endowment across different sources, were interesting,” said Shah.

Ibuki Hada ’25, initially informed of the panel through WIF, was eager to understand how Andover manages its resources. She shared hopes of hearing more details on the donors in future events.

“I was generally interested in how this school uses [and] organizes money that the students or other alums provide... I learned about how PA has really enriched resources compared to other boarding schools and how



COURTESY OF WOMEN IN FINANCE

Student gather in the Tang Institute for a talk with Kirsten Glantz, Chief Investment Officer.

big the school’s efforts are in trying to make transparent how they use and spend money transparently... I’d like to see more about the ratio of the people who endow money are graduates like parents or other generations,” said Hada.

Student Body Co-President Nate Liang ’25 highlighted the importance of transparency in campus processes, noting recent discussions among students about how Andover allocates its finances. He noted that understanding the school’s endowment in student support can foster greater appreciation for the community.

“Around campus there’s been a lot of talk about how exactly Andover uses its finances and I think this is a really great way for people to know where campus finances are going... Knowing how much money Andover

spends on the students and how many resources Andover is tapping into in order to support you,” said Liang.

Sophia Tabibian ’26, co-coordinator of WIF, emphasized the limited opportunities for students to explore economics and finance at Andover. She explained how the event was started due to the lack of access to these subjects, particularly for underclassmen.

“Economics is both one of the highest demanded topics among the student body, yet it also is probably one of the smallest departments on campus. Many students want to learn more about econ and finance, and they don’t really have the opportunities unless they’re a lucky senior who gets the elective. The reason that we can have academic excellence and non-sibi is because there’s money behind it. There are tons

of people behind managing the endowment. It really does affect student life,” said Tabibian.

Reflecting on the panel, Glantz expressed her gratitude for the students’ engagement and curiosity. She shared that the panel discussion was a good starter for thoughtful conversations about finance taking place across campus.

“I came away from [the talk] exceptionally impressed by the students’ interest and really great questions that they asked. I’m really thrilled to know that there’s great interest by the students in the endowment and in finance opportunities at Andover,” said Glantz.

# An Unsung Conciliator: The Evolution of Musicals at Andover

KAI OBATA &  
KRISTEN MA

Prior to the merger in 1974, musicals served as one of the few mediators between Andover and Abbot Academy. Imposing paper-mâché props, all-gender choirs, and orchestral accompaniments were just some of the sights observed at such performances. What began as a few rare showings, a gendered school choir, and small quartets in the late 1800s to early 1900s has since evolved into today’s co-educational Theater and Dance Department that offers numerous productions each year.

Aside from brief mentions in a constitution drafted by Samuel Phillips in 1778, music and theater were largely omitted from the early Andover curriculum, as was the case for Abbot. Each school remained separate from the other on the basis of sex, and music-related activities were no different. “Youth From Every Quarter” by Allis S. Frederick Jr. described the dramatics clubs that formed at Andover in the 1900s and noted the dominance of male actors.

“Drama did not become a significant activity at Phillips Academy until well into the twentieth century... At the turn of the century, a Dramatic Club was formed which presented, among other works, ‘She Stoops to Conquer,’ with boys taking the girls’ parts, but this organization appears to have died out in a few years. In the 1920s interest in the drama revived, and a newly organized Dramatic Club put on at least one production a year, again with the boys playing female parts,” wrote Fredrick Jr.

Earliest records of musicals at Andover date back to the 1940s, but again, these productions encompassed solely male actors until the 1960s. In May of 1973, a coed performance titled “Faculty Follies” was composed of two satirical acts that featured both male and female faculty. “A Singular School” by Susan M. Lloyd discussed the preparation of the musical which eventually became the theme of the official Abbot-Andover merger.

“A winter night’s party became the first of at least four dozen gatherings devoted to writing and rehearsing a “Faculty Follies” more grand, more ridicu-

lous, and more marvelous than any Andover Hill had seen... the theme — the marriage of two historic schools — burst the bonds of the original plot... Everyone helped, all in secret. By the time the curtain opened on May 27 to a packed Davis Hall, the students were breathless with curiosity,” said Lloyd.

The success of musicals akin to “The Faculty Follies” led to the pervasiveness of such productions throughout the late 1900s and well into the 2000s. Today, Andover’s musicals boast casts of diverse genders, grades, and backgrounds. Several performances — among them plays and musicals — are produced annually by the theater department. Serafina B Shin-von Nordenflycht ’25, student director of the musical “Ride the Cyclone,” explained the current theater scene as well as what makes Andover musicals special.

“The current scene at Andover is mostly performance-based in that we don’t have as many educational classes, but we focus on providing three main stage productions every term, one of which is a musical... one thing that makes the specific musicals

special is the casts. In every musical that happens at Andover, the cast environment and the characters, etc. are emphasized more than something like a hierarchy... A lot of people have the understanding that we’re here to make the best show, not to make the best individuals shine. The other thing that is special is that we recently opened up musicals in [901 classes], so there are student-directed shows that happen every single term... it’s a nice, exciting step. The theater department is taking to the future,” said Shin-von Nordenflycht.

Multiple musicals each year require a larger cast, with many actors being recycled in multiple performances and bringing familiarity to individual performances. Patrick Xu ’27 commented on the connections students have built through watching similar troupes.

“Because the people that are there and we have so many shows throughout the year, most people who are in the musicals are also part of other ensembles, whether it’s dancing or music or other forms. So, [when] you see them performing everywhere,

you start to build that connection with them. So when they appear in bigger works like musicals, you really root for each character and each one of them,” said Xu.

While historic musicals featured handmade props as well as music from live choirs and orchestras, contemporary musicals at Andover are equipped with modern sound systems, lights, projection, and special effects. Billie Colmar ’27, who took part in this year’s Identity Show, noted that many of the performances she had attended were very authentic.

“[Musicals at Andover] are very professional. I attended a couple of plays, which was the one they performed in Edinburgh, I think, and I went to see the dance. It’s like, wow, because literally the same people are dancing. It’s just the involvement of the entire crew, you know, it’s very professional. The end product is very professional, like a real thing. You really feel like you’re going to a regular play,” said Colmar.



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# Phrom The Oval Office

Fellow Students,

On this day, we accept this esteemed position with grace and respect to the Editors who came before us. We would like to take this time to commend each of the other excellent candidates. The application was rigorous, perhaps why so few completed it. The few the proud.

Because of our commitment to politically correct humor, we believe we are apt to produce the best content the Eighth Page has ever witnessed. En route to this election victory, we have triumphed and are emerging as our most humorous and politically correct selves.

After a two-year hiatus, women are officially funny again! Piper, fortunately, got elected before Trump's Anti-DEI initiatives were implemented.

After the Declaration of Independence was signed, Virginia Statesman John Page wrote to Thomas Jefferson: "The Eighth Page will bring harmony to the Union." We couldn't agree more. It's time to stand up for our values: comedy, truth, and the absence of actual values. Thank you for electing us as your editors; we couldn't have done it without you.

God bless you all, and God bless America.

## Week's Top Headlines

- *Tim Cook Acquires Eighth Page as the Nation's Leading News Source*
- *Dr. Kington Pulls Up Into the Bassment Dance Blasting "I Just Can't Wait To Be King(ton)"*
- *Andover Finance Bros Devastated and Forced to Disband After DeepSeek IPO*
- *Norovirus Related Incident in Bishop Results in Custodian Strike*
- *Football Called Up to the Super Bowl to Replace the Eagles, Who Will be Blocked From Playing by the Referees*
- *U.S. Approves the Installation of Nearly 2,000 "Dark Elixir Pumps" in Rural Alaska*



K. MA / THE PHILLIPIAN

## OVERHEARD ON THE PATHS

"You see the new Instagram ads? I'm about to get PAID!"

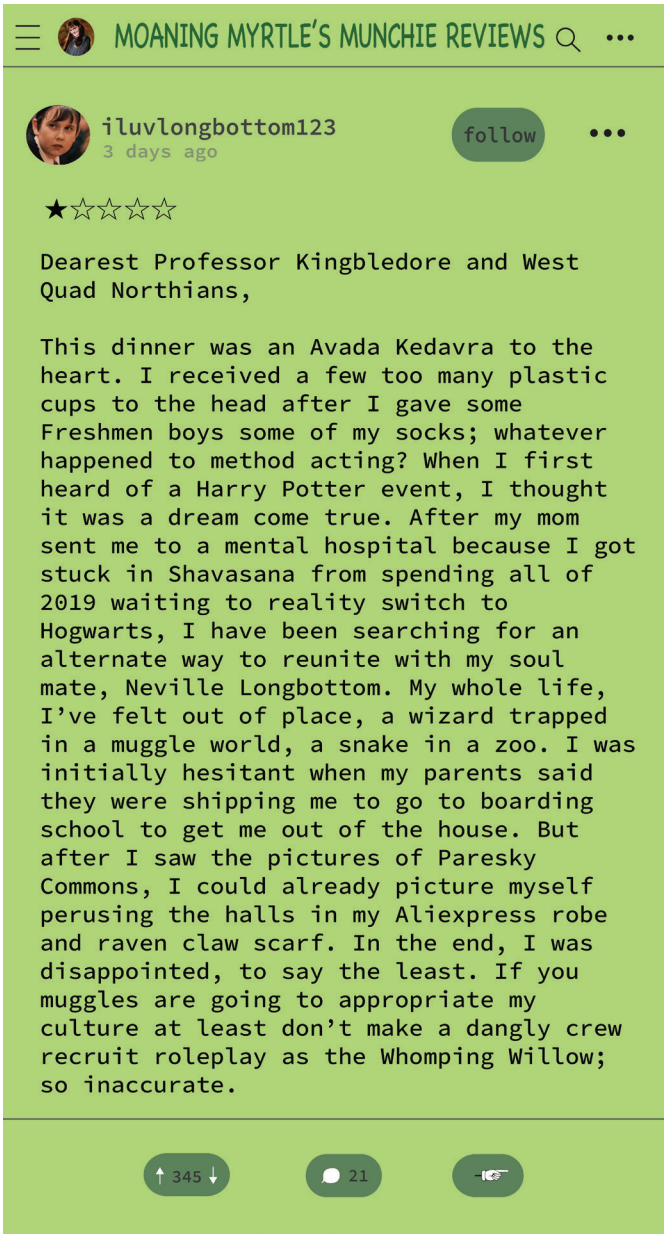
"MY SHAYLAAAAA"

"Bruno Mars should enlist in the Army... I heard he'd catch a grenade for you."

"I play limbo with my grades every term, the bar just gets lower."

"Oh, that was an earthquake. I thought that was my roommate at it again."

"If only they projected Subway Surfers during ASM..."



L. HEYD / THE PHILLIPIAN



# The Phillipian SPORTS

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phillipian phridays!?

## 11th Annual Girls Wrestling Tournament Features 150 Wrestlers and Olympic Gold Medalist Erica Wiebe

DAVID SIAHAAN

Last Sunday, 121 wrestlers from 38 schools traveled to the Snyder Center to compete in the 11th Annual Girls Wrestling Tournament. Before the meet, Olympic gold medalist Erica Wiebe hosted a skills clinic for the wrestlers at the tournament. Andover won the team title with 159 points, three individual champions, and four other placers. Serra Akyali '28, Toni Elliott '27, and Dani Nugent '25 all won their respective weight classes, with Nugent winning her fourth title in a row, a feat never accomplished before.

Head Coach Kassie Bateman '06 provided history about the tournament, which commenced in 2014. She added that it began with only nine wrestlers before expanding to what it is today.

Bateman said, "When we first started, not many coaches wanted to coach back-to-back Saturday and Sunday [meets]. When we first started, it was really small, with only nine girls, so not many coaches wanted to travel to Andover for just a few matches. That was certainly a roadblock, convincing coaches that it was worth getting their female wrestlers this experience. In 2017, our fourth annual tournament, we opened it up to public school wrestlers as well. For the first three years, it was just New England prep schools, and, in 2017, we opened it up to public school wrestlers and had our first guest clinician. Since then, it's just been growing."

She added that girls' wrestling has evolved over the years, with the skill of these wrestlers improving significantly at every level. She also noted that girls' wrestling has grown, with schools now having teams of female wrestlers.

"The quality of girls wrestling in Massachusetts, in New En-



COURTESY OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY

Bella Shmuylovich '26 wrestling at the 11th Annual Girls Wrestling Tournament.

gland Prep, at National Prep, has improved drastically. It's much harder to place at these tournaments now than when we first started it. I would say the coaches' support and enthusiasm to see not only girls on their team but to get girls in these types of all-girl competitions has been really great. When we first started this, it was really common to have one girl from a team. In the past, our tournament had many different schools with one or two girls from each school. Now, we've got schools coming with six, ten, 15 wrestlers on their roster. There is growth of not just a few girls in every program but to have teams," said Bateman.

Toni Elliott '27 noted that the atmosphere during the tournament was much different from

other tournaments she had attended, specifically tournaments such as Beast of the East on December 19.

"Compared to the St. Paul's tournament, it was bigger. There were more mats, so there were more matches at a time. There was also a larger variety of girls from different schools. It was nice to meet people and talk to people. Compared to Beast of the East, it was nice to be in an environment where people from all weight classes talked to each other. With my weight class being small, I could have a conversation with all of them...This tournament was a better opportunity to build community and talk to wrestlers, especially public school kids you wouldn't normally meet," said Elliott.

Erica Wiebe, Canadian 2016 Olympic Gold Medalist, was the guest at the tournament who ran the clinic. Bateman commended her visualization skills, recalling a match she needed to win to qualify for the Olympics.

Bateman said, "One thing that stood out to me, and I keep telling everybody about it, is her mental preparation, which is so impressive. She told us how, in preparation for qualifying for her national team, she had to beat a teammate she had never beaten in five years to get her spot for the Olympics. And every night, before she went to bed, she visualized that match and the tweaks that she was going to make, the changes she was going to make, and every night, just little changes in how she would respond to her opponent. She

knew what she would do and how and by the end of the six weeks, she visualized her winning that match. She said it was the easiest match she had ever won because she had done that mental preparation. I feel like a lot of our athletes may not take seriously the importance of visualization and what that can do for your performance, your physical performance as well."

Moreover, Serra Akyali '28 enjoyed Wiebe's focus on body movement and ability. She recalled how she made the wrestlers do forward rolls with a partner, which was quite challenging.

"I liked her focus on physical abilities. She was focused on moving your body in ways that will help with wrestling. For example, she made us do forward rolls with a partner, which took a lot of coordination. I like how precise she is. Every move was three or four steps, and every move was very powerful," said Akyali.

Bateman hopes to continue providing an opportunity for girls' wrestling competitions, noting that she hopes to expand the tournament.

"We just want to keep bringing opportunities for female wrestlers to compete against other top-tier female wrestlers. We had teams from all over New England. We also had Lawrenceville come up from New Jersey. It was awesome that we had teams from up in Maine to down in New Jersey. To keep providing this opportunity, I would love to keep seeing it grow. We had 155 kids registered. Only 121 competed because of flu and injury. So, I would love to see us grow a little bit, little by little, and see how big we can get this within reason. We don't want a ten-hour tournament, but see how big we can get within this one-day tournament, and keep providing this opportunity."

## A Record Breaking Meet: Track & Field Found Victory in Tri-Meet

ALEX GODSEY

WEDNESDAY 1/29 (GIRLS)	
Andover	60
North Reading	39
Austin Prep	21

WEDNESDAY 1/29 (BOYS)	
Andover	67
North Reading	38
Austin Prep	31

Phillips Academy Track & Field (PATF) took a decisive victory against Austin Preparatory School (Austin Prep) and North Reading High School, led by record-breaking individual performances and an uplifting team culture. Co-Captain Russell Robinson '25 broke the school record for the 55-Meter Dash, and Arashi Hunter '25 broke the



M.STOUT/THE PHILLIPIAN

Kamen Kaleb '25 competes in High Jump event.

record for the mile.

Aviad Awa '28 summed up the performance, emphasizing that both Boys and Girls won.

"The meet was pretty good. We won in both boys and girls categories. There were a few records broken during the meet, so all in all it was a pretty positive meet... Russell stood out because he

broke the school record for the 55-Meter Dash, and we all know he has been trying to do that for a pretty long time, and Arashi also stood out for similar reasons because he broke the one-mile record," said Awa.

Similarly, Christopher Lee '27 also highlighted a race by Tomas Tejapaibul '27 in the 300-Meter Race. A race of

pure grit, Tejapaibul had an exciting finish that exemplified his effort.

"Tomas was in the 300-[Meter Race], and he absolutely killed it. He put everything into that 300-[Meter] Race, crossing the finish line by practically falling over. I watched it right beside him, and the steps were basically forced. It was a great race," said Lee.

According to Warren Oh '28, the 4x400 relay was particularly exciting. Despite losing in the close finish, the team cheered on Ethan Brown '27 throughout.

"In the 4x400 [meter] relay, we had a strong start and the very last runner, Ethan Brown, was going head to head with the other last runner, and it was really close. Unfortunately, we weren't able to pull out the win, but it was a really good effort by him, and what I really liked about that moment was that all of the members of PATF got up and supported him and pushed him, and I think that's what gave him that extra spark to keep him going during that last stretch" said Oh.

With the large community track offers, Lee expressed

the rare opportunity students have in track.

"[Track & Field] is probably about 11 or 12 percent of the student population, so a lot of us are going to try something new, a lot of us are going to run something new, and we get to do it well because of the great coaching and staff," said Lee

Looking to the future, Oh discussed how the team will work on training and improving in the future.

"[Head] Coach Keri Lambert mentioned that what we are really trying to do is peak athletically towards the middle to the end of the season, which is the end of February and beginning of March. What we're trying to do is... have tech days where we work on our mechanics... Then, we have hard days which are like workout days, [including] fighting off exhaustion. Really pushing our body to our limits so that we can grow. And then a recovery day, which we take lightly to ensure that our bodies are in the best shape," said Oh.

### Girls Basketball Dominates Against Deerfield, Beats St. Paul's by 40 points

By Audrey Baeten-Ruffo & Chloe Park

Last Saturday, Girls Basketball defeated Deerfield, winning 64-49. Despite the first quarter ending at 13-13, Andover took control of the game, ending the second quarter with a commanding 25-point lead. Although Deerfield made a slight comeback in the second half of the game, the team ultimately held on to win by 15. Later in the week on Wednesday, Andover won big against St. Paul's, defeating the opponents 15-55 despite being away. Chloe Abou-Ezzi '27 added, "We played really well individually and as a whole. We had great steals and made good passes. We had very strong defense, we were strong with the ball, and we had a lot of rebounds and just like great plays." These two wins continue Girls Basketball's 5-1 winning streak as they turn their season around after starting 2-6.

### All-Gender Nordic Skiing Boys and Girls Both Place Second at the Weston Ski Track, While placing Sixth and Seventh, Respectively, at St. Paul's

By Thiago Jollon

Last Friday, All-Gender Nordic Skiing raced at the Weston Ski Track in a Skate 5-Kilometer Race. Among Belmont Hill, Middlesex, and Rivers, Co-Captains Luke Williamson '25 and Sage Preston '25 lead Andover, finishing fourth in 15:45 and third in 18:36 in the boys and girls divisions, respectively. The combined standings of the team's boys and girls athletes both ranked second in their gendered divisions. On Wednesday, Nordic Skiing competed against multiple schools at St. Paul's. In the non-binary and Boys division, Andover placed sixth; the team's girls athletes placed seventh. Next Friday, the team will enter a four-school competition against Rivers, Middlesex, and Belmont Hill.

TRACK & FIELD

A True Role Model: Boys Indoor Track & Field Co-Captain Jakob Kuelps '25

AARON HUANG

For Co-Captain Jakob Kuelps '25, effective leadership lies in acting as a role model for his teammates, holding the Indoor Track & Field community accountable, and guiding them through tough workouts. Growing up in a European household, he began his athletic journey playing soccer, then sprinting in the 100-Meter Dash. After joining a running club, Kuelps has since trained for long-distance events, which includes the 1600-Meter and 3200-Meter Races.

Kuelps leads by acting as a role model and friend to his Track & Field team. He strives to be both personable while knowing when to transition the team to a more focused mood.

Kuelps said, "I try to bring up people and not bog them down. I try to be supportive and try to be a captain that's not just strict. I also try to hold people accountable, but also be funny, be there, and be on-point. I just want to be there, where people feel they can talk to me regarding things outside of practice. Track & Field is a great place to talk about Track & Field things... [But] I try to cultivate a dedicated and supportive group, where people feel like they can talk to



T.BASVI/THE PHILLIPIAN

me about anything."

According to Robert Budzinski '26, Kuelps takes initiative, regularly leading team activities. Budzinski described the standards that Kuelps holds him and the rest of his teammates to.

"He's a pretty vocal leader. I definitely noticed during both Cross Country and now go-

ing into Track & Field season, because he was also a Cross Country Co-Captain. He takes charge a lot: he'll lead things like warm-ups, et cetera, but he also does a real good job keeping everyone accountable. I know personally, he keeps me accountable, making sure I'm eating right and sleeping well, and all that stuff outside of

practice," said Budzinski.

Andover's running community is what Kuelps values highest. He enjoys the support that his teammates provide one another and the team's distinctive group of athletes, whose experience in the sport ranges extensively.

Kuelps said, "The people are my favorite thing. Coming to practice every day and seeing everybody light up with their faces, really excited to get after it and become better every day, push each other in the workouts and support each other and make each other chase greater heights; it is something that makes me want to come to practice every day."

Max Langhorst '25 described Kuelps as an altruistic leader, versatile runner, and fierce yet humble competitor. The Co-Captain competes in a wide range of events and in all of them, is capable of strong performances.

Langhorst said, "I would say he's definitely fast, first off. I would say he's a selfless runner. When you're running, when you lead a race, it's taking a little bit of a risk, because all the people who are behind you, they might come from behind in the last part of the race and beat you, and he's always the guy leading the race for the group... He also tries to act like he doesn't have

speed, he tries to act like he's completely aerobically dominant, and he's some marathoner, but when you put him in a 400[-Meter Dash], some speed event, he's also really fast. So, he's pretty versatile."

Throughout past seasons, Kuelps has dealt with a persistent shin injury. This year, he hopes to maintain his health while undergoing high-volume training. Kuelps plans on attending Middlebury College next year and walk on to the Cross Country and Track & Field program.

"I would say this season [my goal] is to remain healthy. Something that's kind of been ongoing has been a shin injury of mine that's been flaring on and off. So doing all the things and making sure that I'm remaining healthy throughout this season is something that I'm really striving to do. Another goal that I have that's more long term is running in college. Next year, I'm going to go to Middlebury College, and hopefully I'll be able to walk on to the team there, continue to run, and continue to immerse myself in these amazing running communities and meet these amazing people that the sport of running, and the sport of track and field fosters," said Kuelps.

Girls Indoor Track Co-Captain Darielys Almonte '25: A Commitment to Unity and Leaving a Legacy

EMILY NEY

Co-Captain Darielys Almonte '25 is a friendly face on and off Andover's Indoor Track & Field team, leading with constant support. Almonte places a strong emphasis on team unity, striving to build strong team chemistry and foster a sense of camaraderie between every athlete.

Inspired by her mother, who was a collegiate athlete, Almonte developed her passion for track in the fourth grade. For Almonte, her mother was not only someone who motivated her to keep pursuing track but also a friend with whom she could share this interest.

"I started track in the fourth grade. My mom was a runner and ran at the collegiate level. I remember loving to run at an early age and having my mother be a runner pushed me to run even more. My mom is my best friend. Running was and still is something that we share. Honestly, pursuing long jumping specifically is something I don't remember. All I know is that I've been doing it since [I've been on] my club team, Cambridge Jets," said Almonte.

Almonte prioritizes being open to everyone, aiming to create a supportive atmosphere where teammates can reach out for help or advice in

any situation.

"The leadership I display is a friendly type of leadership. I always try to help people when I can and be a friendly face on the track. I strive to be a leader that people can go to for help or anything really," said Almonte.

Almonte continued, explaining how she makes an effort to unify the team by energizing and supporting others. She also mentioned that making others feel comfortable at meets by assuring them they are not alone is a priority for her.

"I make [the team] feel unified by always encouraging and hyping others up. I also try to be as honest as possible so if I'm feeling super anxious at a meet or if I'm tired, I don't hide it so that others feel comfortable and know that they're not alone," said Almonte.

Laura Mazzarelli '27 spoke on how Almonte's leadership is characterized by her positivity and encouragement. She recalled a workout in which Almonte relentlessly motivated the team to keep pushing forward and not give up.

"Dari's leadership is very positive and very affirmation based I'd say. She's always trying to cheer people on. We did a workout this week and she was one of the first people to go and she would always say, 'Just a few more to go, we



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got this, we got this!' I also was in a relay with her and we were practicing pass-offs and she was always very motivational and inspirational," said Mazzarelli.

Mazzarelli recalled practicing relay hand-offs with Almonte, ultimately leading to success in the 4x200 Meter race in the team's recent meet last Wednesday. She shared how Almonte helped improve the team's overall technique by correcting certain skills while also creating a safe space where Mazzarelli felt comfortable making mistakes.

"When we did the relay

together, [Almonte] was the person I was passing off to. We messed up the first few times we practiced together. Eventually, on the actual day we passed off, we got it. I'd say that she contributed a lot to that because she made sure that we corrected what was needed whilst also making me feel safe to make mistakes," said Mazzarelli.

Recalling a time she was competing, Chloe Song '26 shared her appreciation for Almonte's encouragement, especially since it came from a different event group.

"When I did my event, I

just remember her cheering for me. And it's just so nice to have people from different event groups cheering for you because they're coming from a different corner of the team," said Song.

Song continued, sharing how Almonte is a proactive and passionate captain. Almonte utilizes her personal connections to work well and solve problems within her event group.

"She's pretty proactive and a pretty passionate captain. I've seen that whenever there's a problem since she's made a lot of personal connections with those in her event group she's able to just connect well and solve problems," said Song.

While Almonte doesn't plan to run collegiately she will still continue running recreationally, especially because of how it connects her to herself and her loved ones. Additionally, she believes her younger teammates will continue a positive legacy.

"I don't plan on running in college but running will always be a part of my life. I love going on runs by myself and my family. Running is therapeutic for me... I see my leadership reflected in my younger teammates that I'm closer to on the team. I see stepping into leadership roles and I know they will make amazing future captains," said Almonte.

Girls Indoor Track Co-Captain Emma Hagstrom '25: a Quiet Yet Disciplined Runner

ASHLEY SUH

Emma Hagstrom '25 not only encourages her teammates but also leads by example with her strong dedication to the team. Through her commitment, she serves as a role model others on the team look up to and aspire to be like.

Hagstrom was introduced to the sport in middle school by her mother, who ran in college. Continuing the sport at Andover, the friendships she made and the challenges of track push her to become better.

"I think it's a great group of people, and that's what keeps me coming back. I also really like the mental challenge of running, especially distance running – it's a very mentally taxing sport. So I think I just feel accomplished every day after a long run or workout. I guess I'd say the mental dedication keeps me going," said Hagstrom.

Chloe Song '26 spoke on Hagstrom's caring and quiet nature. Although sports captains typically gain respect from their peers by being outspoken,



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Hagstrom has gained respect through leading by example.

"She cares a lot about the girls and even though she doesn't always express it in a very outward way, because she's an introvert, honestly, I think a lot of times there aren't a lot of elected introverted captains. Most of the time it's expected you're outgoing. You put

yourself out there, but Emma isn't like that. She still has [a lot of] respect from her peers, especially the distance team. You put in the work and Emma does that. That's the quality. I think I look up to her most and I'm sure our teammates feel the same," said Song.

Amelie Alvazzi '26 added to Song's point by noting how

Hagstrom enhances team culture by guiding all new runners and encouraging them to pursue all their goals. Furthermore, although Hagstrom is often quiet, she creates a vibrant team environment by always being supportive.

"I think Emma's always about including all the girls and making sure they feel welcome, and I think just boosting everyone up. So like, I remember both in cross country and track, she's always hyping everyone, cheering them on. She would give us a pep talk before. And I think in practice, she always says hi to everyone and talks to people, and then in meets she's always cheering people on and stuff and hyping them up," said Alvazzi.

Song reiterated how Hagstrom serves as an excellent role model for other runners. By being consistent and disciplined in her work ethic and schedule, Hagstrom's qualities permeate the rest of the team.

"I think she's very consistent as someone who leads warm-ups and getting people into a routine is something she's good at because she also is really strict on herself and follows a routine. Her bedtime is around

nine, she gets good hours of sleep every single day. She's the perfect role model for how much sleep you should be getting as a student-athlete. I think once people realize that Emma is a leader who leads by example, she's what you want to be. I think people try to be more like her," said Song.

As Hagstrom has run track for eight years, she believes perseverance and dedication is her biggest strength. Although running is both physically and mentally demanding, Hagstrom tries to stay diligent as a way to encourage others.

"Sometimes it's hard because track is a hard sport. You have to show up every day and sometimes there's a workout or just a long run that you really don't want to do, or sometimes you just really don't want to be there, and that's hard to say, but it's a truth. Not everyone is 100 percent every day. I try to bring 100 percent of what I have every day to practice, especially now that I'm a captain," said Hagstrom.

Hagstrom plans to continue track in college.

# Building Bonds and Breaking Records: Co-Captain Russell Robinson '25 Leads Boys Indoor Track & Field with Passion

ALISTAIR FRITZ-GRUBER

Russell Robinson '25, Co-Captain of the Boys Indoor Track and Field team, has been a staple in the program since his Junior year. Inspired by his passion for personal improvement, Robinson's dedication to track has brought him both individual and team success. Today, Robinson continues to lead by example, breaking Andover's 55-meter sprint record during a meet on January 29.

Although his track journey started later than many, Robinson expressed how he quickly realized that the sport was where he belonged. Beyond competitive spirit, Robinson emphasized how the satisfaction of personal growth and improvement attracted him to the sport.

"I first joined the track team in seventh grade, but I never competed in a meet until ninth grade due to Covid-19. I guess it really started for me in the winter of my Junior year... Track is nice be-



T.BASVI/THE PHILLIPIAN

cause the only thing that matters is you and your own time. You can always measure your own improvement, and that's what kept me coming back," said Robinson. Robinson explained how the

mentorship of previous track captains left a lasting impact on him. As a captain, Robinson strives to do the same for others, ensuring that the team is not just focused on performance but also on cama-

raderie and support.

"I had great mentors, like Daniel Bae [23], my captain [two years ago], who kept me going even when I thought about trying something else, like ultimate frisbee. He literally pulled me back to track and said, 'We need you.' ... As a captain, I try to make track a fun place for everyone," Robinson says. "I ask a fun question every day during warm-ups to get people talking, like 'What do you think the color blue tastes like?' It's just a way to connect people and make the atmosphere light and enjoyable," said Robinson.

Cameron Butler '28 recalled how Robinson inspired the team by giving speeches before meets. Butler praised Robinson's leadership.

"He really inspires all the younger people on the team. He gives really inspiring speeches before the meets to prepare everyone and hype them up," said Butler.

Robinson's leadership style extends beyond team morale. Aviad Awa '28 noted that Robinson is passionate about sharing

his knowledge and helping his teammates improve their skills, whether with technique or mental preparation.

"I remember when we were doing block starts, Russell showed me exactly how to line up to improve my time. From one meet to the next, I shaved time off my 55-Meter dash. Russell is really good at noticing the small details in form that others might miss, and he'll correct them before they become a problem," said Awa.

While he has no immediate plans to pursue track at the collegiate level, Robinson's passion for the sport remains strong. Hoping to stay active and connected to the sport, he plans to continue running, whether for leisure or through intramural sports.

"I'm not trying to get recruited for college track, but I do plan to keep running, even if it's just for fun or intramural leagues. Track has been such a great part of my life, and I want to stay active, even after I graduate," said Robinson.

## Track & Field Assistant Coach Spread



E.LIU/THE PHILLIPIAN

### Pole Vault Coach: Jamal English

"Overprepare to meet the moment that happens with no fear but confidence. I believe all sport is more physical than mental. Yogic breath, mobility, and stability work matter as much as power, endurance, fast and slow twitch. That mindset and recovery as well as nutrition are underrated. Going from a 35-inch vertical and 16-mile run five times a week to five-mile power walks and yoga after hip replacement teaches these lessons. But really, I have always been there. Prepare, visualize, and breathe the performance you desire to manifest. Yeah — some Phil Jackson kinda stuff."

### Long Jump/Triple Jump Coach: Lisa Joseph

"I encourage my athletes to experiment with the techniques of take-off, flight, and landing to build body awareness. Their confidence, speed, and focus on the runway impact everything that follows in the long/triple jump. By building muscle memory through drills, I believe that my athletes can reach their desired goals. Disciplined hard work and self-care usually help them realize these goals."



COURTESY OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY



M.STOUT/THE PHILLIPIAN

### Distance Coach: Patrick Rielly

"I want all of our distance athletes to be excited about coming to practice every day. As distance running is about repetition and routine over the long term, we try to emphasize getting a little bit stronger, a little bit faster, and a little bit better in every practice. I'm proud of how the distance runners support and push each other to be at their best in practices and during races. They're some of the toughest athletes on campus."

### Throws Specialist: John Rex

"I want us to have fun and I want us to work hard. We have such a great group of young people. You know it's very inclusive you know, regardless of gender. Everybody accepts everybody else and treats everybody with respect regardless of ability. I love the fact that I try and create an environment where everybody helps each other out too, so... if somebody sees a mistake somebody's making... they'll help out their teammate and I think it's a group that's really generally happy for everybody and their success, no matter what they do or their ability level."



/THE PHILLIPIAN

### Head Coach and Sprints Coach: Keri Lambert

"I want my athletes to feel a part of something that's bigger than themselves, whether that's the whole [Phillips Academy Track & Field] (PATF) community, their event/training group, or a relay team. Track & field is often believed to be an "individual sport," but PATF athletes defy that every day. From offering feedback to one another on block starts to pacing one another through workouts, the teamwork I see students show at Snyder [Center] really inspires me. Before meets, I ask students to invest in one another's performances and see each other's successes as their own, and I really believe that most of the team takes that to heart... I also see that reflected in PATF's coaching staff. We're a collegial group and every coach is always trying to step up and help out the team overall however they can. That makes a huge difference considering our roster size, the range of events we compete in, and the amount of hosting we do."



A.LE/THE PHILLIPIAN

# Girls Squash Rebounds From Loss to Tabor With Two Dominant Victories Over Exeter and St. Paul’s

ALISTAIR FRITZ-GRUBER

SATURDAY 1/25		
Andover		8
Exeter		0
WEDNESDAY 1/29		
Andover		9
St. Pauls		0

Having lost its first game last week to Tabor Academy (Tabor), Girls Squash (7-1) bounced back with consecutive sweeps over Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) and St. Paul’s. The team’s strong connection on and off the court fueled this flawless week to revive its win streak. Now the team looks to work hard in practice to keep improving and finish the season strong.

Throughout a successful winter season, the team has built a fun and supportive environment

where teammates push each other to improve daily. Robin Lukens ’28 emphasized how the team’s bond has made practices and games more enjoyable.

Lukens said, “The squash season so far has been really fun. All the girls on the team have had a lot of fun, and for me, it has also been a great start to high school squash. We have also had a pretty good dynamic from the start. All the girls on the team get along pretty well. The team has a really good bond, we have a lot of fun together that in turn makes practice and playing much more enjoyable.”

Furthermore, the team has strengthened its bond through joint activities with the Boys Squash team. The teams often hold meals together on game days to build camaraderie.

“We build this bond by having events with both the girls varsity team and in collaboration with the boys team. We had a gift exchange last week. It was white elephant, and that was fun. We had a pizza party, and we’ve had a lot of team brunches or team lunches before our weekend games, or sometimes team dinners. This is always fun for us because it helps us connect with the team more,” said Lukens.

Minnie Kim ’27 emphasized



K.MA/THE PHILLIPIAN

Andover Girls Squash huddles at Andover/Exeter.

that the team is driven by the desire to win. Understanding how Andover was favored in these matchups, it played with determination and aggression.

“Going in we were a little nervous, we knew we were better than the other team, but we just wanted to win so badly. So going in, we were super aggressive, super strong, and it showed in the scores and how well we played,” said Kim.

As Andover had not beaten St. Paul’s in many years, Kim also attributed the team’s focus in prac-

tice for its success. She was especially proud that its preparation was reflected in the final score.

“This match was amazing. We played St. Paul’s and this was the first time beating them in five or ten years. It was really great and just goes to show that through training and practice we can get better and beat people we have never beaten before,” said Kim.

To prepare for the week’s matches, the team practiced “tin-touches” to improve its endurance on the court. Though exhausting, Lukens highlighted

the long-term benefits of the drill. The team also prioritizes stretching after practice to prevent injuries.

“We did a ton of tin-touches. This is basically when you run from the T (center) to the tin. We do it around ten times, and then do three reps of it. It is kind of grueling, but it builds good character and good strength. We train together and do a lot of fitness together, we stretch every day to make sure we avoid injuries. Overall, we generally help each other to be a better team by pushing each other bit by bit every day,” said Lukens.

Kim also emphasized the team’s commitment to maintaining a focused mindset in every practice. Even on difficult days, its effort and determination make each session productive and fun.

“Every time we come into practice, we are all ready to work super hard and we all want to go out there and try our best and have fun. Everyone comes into practice super focused and ready to play. So, it’s a super focused space and even if we’re all tired and mentally drained, it’s still good practice,” said Kim.

Girls Squash will play its next

# Girls Hockey Extends Their Win Streak to Ten, Prevailing Against Cushing

ALEX DIMNAKU

WEDNESDAY 1/29		
Andover		4
Cushing		2

Girls Hockey (10-1-1) faced Cushing on Wednesday and secured a decisive victory, extending its win streak to ten games. The team’s offensive play was especially strong, allowing the team to keep possession of the puck for most of the match. Now the team looks to fine tune its strategy and watch film on its opponents leading up to its next game against Buckingham Browne & Nichols (BB&N).

Lily McInerney ’26 praised the impressive play of Junior goalie Marie Lee ’28, who stepped up to start due to the injury of the team’s typical goalie. McInerney emphasized the importance of staying focused during practice amidst a busy week of games. She highlighted the team’s focus on breakouts, puck collec-



M.STOUT/THE PHILLIPIAN

Caroline Averill ’26 and Sarah Powers ’26 during game against Cushing.

tions, and conditioning.

“Our goalie, Marie Lee [stood out]. She’s a Junior. It’s hard coming in here new. Our starting goalie has a concussion right now. She had a really good game tonight... This week’s practice, Monday, we started with some conditioning and skating. This week is a big week for us, we have

three games so focusing on our breakouts and our puck collections has been important this week,” said McInerney.

Vanessa Hall ’28 reflected on how Cushing threatened to tie the game for much of the match. She pointed to a key play between Caroline Averill ’26 and Sarah Powers

’26 that helped secure a critical lead.

“[The score] was three to two for a while and that’s close because then if they get a goal, then it’s tied. There was one play where Caroline Averill was coming down the ice to the puck and Sarah Powers busted to the net and got a pass from her. It was a really good pass and Sarah Powers scored on it. It gave us a good lead so it wasn’t as tight,” said Hall.

Hall recounted the team’s strong offensive performance and ability to maintain puck possession. She also noted that focusing too much on offense sometimes led to defensive lapses.

“We did very well on offense all game. The puck was in their end of the ice the whole time. We just had good puck possession and cycling the puck and [Cushing] didn’t really have that at all. I would say a weakness is also how much offense we had because sometimes we’d get too carried away and then they’d have like a two on one because we weren’t focusing on defense,” said Hall.

McInerney praised the team’s effort, highlighting their success in winning 50-

50 puck races and getting pucks to the net. She also noted that their effort helped them beat Cushing to loose pucks.

“We were really hard on pucks and we won a lot of the 50-50 races and we got a lot of pucks to the net and we’re working on our screens which has been good. Cushing, they’re a young team, and they’re also really hard on the puck but I think we were just able to beat them to a lot of them tonight,” said McInerney.

McInerney discussed the importance of the team working on its strategy and preparing for opponents by watching film. She noted the significance of reflecting on their own performance and studying their upcoming rivals.

“I look forward to working on the power play and penalty kill and also watching film on our opponents has been big for us this week also, so I’m excited to watch some more film,” said McInerney.

Girls Hockey will play BB&N on Friday at home.

# Boy’s Hockey Follows up Tough Game Against Nobles with a Resounding Win over Winchendon

ALEX DIMNAKU

SATURDAY 1/25		
Andover		1
Nobles		7
WEDNESDAY 1/29		
Andover		4
Winchendon		1

Although Boys Hockey (10-5-3) lost severely against Noble & Greenough (Nobles) on Saturday, the game served as a wake-up call. As a result, the team responded with a dominant 4-1 win over Winchendon, matching their largest margin of victory this season. After a challenging stretch since Christmas Break, previously possessing a 2-4-1 record, the team has shown growth and recorded its best win of the new year.

Max Krasovsky ’27 noted that during the Nobles game, the team was out of sync. However, during the

game against Winchendon, it played as a cohesive unit. He emphasized that the team’s change in attitude made a significant difference in the team’s performance.

“In the Nobles game, our passes weren’t connecting, and guys were out of sync. We weren’t playing as a team. Even though we’ve beaten Nobles before, that game showed we weren’t working together. This game, though, brought a different attitude. We were more focused, played more cohesively, and connected better as a team. The guys were more willing to work with each other, not worried about individual mistakes, and that helped us perform better as a team,” said Krasovsky.

After Saturday’s loss, the team silently reflected on its mistakes prior to Monday’s practice. Krasovsky said the discussions in practice were more important than the game itself as it helped the team improve significantly.

“After Saturday’s game, it was pretty quiet. We didn’t talk much, but we acknowledged what happened. When we got back to practice on Monday, we focused on what we weren’t doing right, and that carried over into the

game. It wasn’t necessarily about Saturday’s game, but more about addressing the issues in the days that followed,” said Krasovsky.

Edouard Lord ’26 added onto Krasovsky’s point and attributed the team’s mental reset as the key to their improvement against Winchendon. He pointed to the players’ meeting as a turning point, where the team collectively reflected about its struggles.

“I think it was more mental. The players’ meeting helped, and it’s tough mentally when you drop a few games in heartbreaking fashion. Just communicating with each other helped a lot with the mentality, and I think that was the main factor in why we were able to bounce back,” said Lord.

On top of the players’ meetings, Head Coach Paul Tortorella ’80 made key adjustments to the lineup, with Alex Theodore ’27 switching to the first line before the Winchendon game. Nate Kreppner ’27 highlighted how this change, along with an improved practice plan, helped the team succeed.

“Coach also put together a great practice plan. The last two practices focused on

conditioning because we may have fallen behind a little since the Christmas break. It was noticeable in our previous games, but today we were back in top shape and flying all game. Coach reminded us to just keep playing our game and doing what we do. If we do that, the pucks will go our way, and we’ll win these big games,” said Kreppner.

Kreppner also described how the game unfolded, explaining that while the first period was evenly matched, the team took control in the second and third periods. Its strong play in the later periods allowed Andover to secure the win.

“In the first period, it was pretty back-and-forth. Their team played a lot of chip-and-chase hockey. There were a lot of icings and stoppages. They took advantage of some defensive mistakes on the walls. But in the second and third periods, we came out, showed our skill, and proved we were the better team. They weren’t able to claw their way back, and we took control of the game,” said Kreppner.

Lord praised the team for maintaining defensive discipline late in the game, which had been an issue in previous matchups. He emphasized

that the team finally learned to play until the final buzzer, preventing opponents from making late-game comebacks.

“I think the key was that we played a very good defensive game towards the end. We’ve had issues before where we’ve led teams, and they’ve come back into games. Today, we were able to prevent that. Chase [Anderson ’25] made some great saves, and we didn’t stop playing until the game was over. We’ve learned not to assume the game is over until the final buzzer,” said Lord.

Looking ahead, Lord reiterated the team’s goal of making the Elite Eight Tournament but stressed the importance of focusing on one game at a time. He believes staying in the moment is crucial to the team’s success.

“Obviously, we need to win most of our remaining games to stay in the elite eight and compete for the playoffs. But we don’t want to look too far ahead. We want to take it game by game and not lose focus,” said Lord.

Boys Hockey plays Loomis on Saturday at Andover.

# A Strong Week: Boys Squash Secures Three Victories and One Defeat

HAOYU ZHANG		
FRIDAY 1/24		
Andover		7
Nobles		0
SATURDAY 1/25		
Andover		2
Hotchkiss		5
SATURDAY 1/25		
Andover		6
Hopkins		1
WEDNESDAY 1/29		
Andover		5
St. Pauls		2

Boys Squash (7-4) showcased grit and determination in their four matches this past week. Although Ando-

ver began the week strong by sweeping Noble & Greenough (Nobles), it lost against Hotchkiss in a doubleheader on Saturday. However, the team quickly rebounded with two dominant victories against Hopkins, in the same doubleheader, and St. Paul's on Wednesday.

Franklin Kozol '27 commented about the game against Nobles, praising his teammates despite his own narrow defeat as the eighth seed. Although there were some closer matches during the top seeded players' games, the team closed out the games.

"The team executed everywhere that they needed to. We got in there, we did what we needed to, and we got out with all wins. I disappointingly lost as the eight [seed], but thankfully the eighth spot doesn't count because I disappointed my team a little bit. However, everyone else did what they needed to. We had some tougher matches towards the top, but I think the team still handled them very well," said Kozol.

Kozol commended Corey Shen '26 for his perseverance during his match. Although his opponent won the third game 11-9, Shen kept composure and adjusted to win

a decisive 11-4 victory in the fourth game.

"Corey has a particular ability to keep a level head when an opponent starts crawling back on him. I've seen them outside of school in tournaments and also in a lot of the school matches. Last week he was down 2-0. He came back and won still. It shows you it's never too late to figure out what you're doing wrong, and there's always a chance to fix it until the other person finishes off the game," said Kozol.

Despite the strong win against Nobles, the team's mental strength was tested in their doubleheader on Saturday. Despite its loss to Hotchkiss, Aaron Bai '27 talked about how this loss was a reminder for the team to develop its skills and mentality.

Bai said, "We played our best and moving forward, we need to think more about our strategy. We just wanted to go all out and try our best. To fight back and I would say we did that pretty well. In the future, I'd say we're gonna try harder and pull a victory. I think the more games we play, the better our mental is gonna be, and we need to keep working on our technique. Back foot, our footwork, shot placements, and to play

smarter."

Following the long weekend's two trips and three matches, Andover battled St. Paul's. Although Boys Squash won 5-2, the team should have been better mentally prepared.

"The team did what we needed to do. We won our match, which was ultimately the end goal. Though we did have a little bit of a problem where sometimes we underestimate opponents who aren't as good as us, and as a result, we end up losing some focus during the match or we don't go into it properly prepared. Even though we are better than our opponents, we let them get a game from us so what we need to be working on is to not take our opponents lightly and focus on every match," said Shen.

Squash is the embodiment of adaptation and perseverance. That being said, Shen believes that although the team possesses strong fundamental skills, he believes everyone could improve by developing its decision making.

"It's all about mental toughness for us. And we've been training so much, our practical, our technical skills are all very sound.

We can hit whatever shot we want, we have a huge ar-

senal we can choose from. It's just about choosing the right ones at the right times," said Shen.

Shen added onto his other point regarding the mental aspect of squash and discussed how the team needs to adapt to pressure. Although each player has weekly challenge matches, to determine their seeds, the team should simulate more authentic match environments during practice.

"We don't do enough of it. The only thing that comes close is when we play our challenge matches. I think that's a lot of high pressure situations, even though we're all teammates. But everyone's trying to play higher up on the ladder, and so it brings a lot of pressure to each of the challenge matches. It's good that we play a lot of challenge matches because it simulates what a real match would be like. I hope our players improve from them," said Shen.

This Saturday, Boys Squash will attend the High School Nationals Tournament against Belmont Hill, Choate, and Westminster. On Wednesday, the team will go away and face Exeter.

# Boys Basketball Strikes Back: Two Consecutive Victories against Deerfield and Milton

MATHEW LIU		
SATURDAY 1/25		
Andover		66
Deerfield		62
WEDNESDAY 1/29		
Andover		84
Milton		68

Boys Basketball (6-7) bounced back with two consecutive wins after a three-game losing streak. On Saturday, they defeated Deerfield by four points after trailing

by 12 points late in the game. The team went on to comfortably secure its second victory against Milton on Wednesday.

Before competing this week, the team held a meeting to address their recent challenges. Kosi Udeh '27 reflected on how it motivated and reminded them of their abilities to perform at championship-winning level.

"We had a meeting without the coaches and basically laid everything out on the table. We talked about the problems we were facing, and I think we got closer as a team after that. That definitely helped shift our mindset. The fact that we were the championship team last year and want[ed] to maintain that standard, really pushed us. We can't afford any more losses," said Udeh.

David Fridia '25 elaborated on the team's change in mental game, emphasizing morale

and staying persistent.

"We worked on always being confident, but still coming together and learning how to communicate. Sometimes, when things aren't going our way, we just fight ourselves instead of the opponent. We were down by 12 [against Deerfield], but then we came down and got a steal, which was really crucial," said Fridia.

The team's communication-centered game plan allowed them to ultimately prevail on Saturday. Yet, despite defeating Deerfield, Udeh noted the difficulty in overcoming the point deficit, resulting in the team's efforts to set the tone early on Wednesday.

"Coming off the Deerfield game, we knew we still had some things to work on... But really, we just wanted to put them on their heels first. In

previous games, it felt like we were playing catch-up and responding to their points, but I feel like teams should be adjusting to us because we're the more offensive team," said Udeh.

Hunter Peabody '27 attributed the team's win on Wednesday to a renewed focus on defense and its consistency in forcing turnovers, a key factor in their back-to-back victories.

"I remember getting a steal that led to a pump fake, and then I got fouled and hit some free throws. [Xavier Abreu '25] also made a lot of [three-pointers]. We had a lot of great defensive stops that really crushed the other team's momentum. That's what helped us secure the win, just stops and scores, stops and scores," said Peabody.

Moving forward, the team

hopes to use their recent victories to restore confidence and their past losses to serve as fuel, pushing them to put in maximum effort both on and off the court.

"We've had injuries, players getting sick, but we came together as a unit and said, 'We're sick of losing. We need this week. We need to go 3-0.' That was our biggest motivation. TI had a lot to do with it, pushing us in practice, and I feel like we were just hungry. We wanted to win, and we knew we could," said Peabody.

Boys Basketball will travel to Loomis Chaffee this Friday, looking to continue their momentum and extend their winning streak.

# Crossword Corner

BY MAX LANGHORST

		1	2	3
4	5			
6				
7				
8				

- ACROSS
- 1 Word with Volkswagen or Gogh
  - 4 \_\_\_\_ Taco, ice cream truck classic
  - 6 Villainous retreats
  - 7 Most important skateboarding trick
  - 8 Eggs on
- DOWN
- 1 "Ta-dal"
  - 2 Sour, as a smell
  - 3 Mr. Potato Head parts
  - 4 Plumbing problem
  - 5 Thing for an angel or a gamer

	1	2	3	4
5				
6				
7				
8				

- ACROSS
- 1 Legendary rec ball move
  - 5 Beatle \_\_\_\_ (fanatacism)
  - 6 Cute mammals that snuggle while sleeping underwater
  - 7 Flinch, say
  - 8 Puzzles pieces to start with
- DOWN
- 1 Flowery wallpaper or beige, for example
  - 2 Remove from an IG post
  - 3 Brother's daughter
  - 4 Go \_\_\_\_
  - 5 "Encore!"

1	2	3	4	
5				6
7				
8				
	9			

- ACROSS
- 1 Throw a ball down a lane, maybe?
  - 5 Word next to "Normal text" and "11 pt", in a doc
  - 7 "\_\_\_\_ it!" (hurry up!)
  - 8 They could be white, red, or crew
  - 9 "\_\_\_\_ Always a Woman," Billy Joel Song
- DOWN
- 1 Alternative to loose-leaf
  - 2 Twistable cookies
  - 3 Broomstick rider
  - 4 Jewish pancake
  - 6 The L in OILRIG (shoutout chemistry students)

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# Arts & Leisure

The Phillipian

## All-Black for the Night

MAGGIE SHU & ALEXANDRA LIN

Last Saturday night, The Andover Edition organized the elaborate Bassment dance with a simple dress code: all-black attire. Students incorporated personal style with the theme. Some chose timeless basics, pairing versatile pieces with a classic black jean, while others experimented with silhouettes and playful accessories. Each look displays students' individuality and ability to curate an outfit.

### NINA TORRENS '26

"I wore this pair of dark, almost between a blue and a gray, 901 90s style from Levi's. They were really comfortable, and I usually wear those jeans to dances. Then I wore my black Malibu Sugar tank top... I knew I wanted to be comfortable since Bassment usually gets pretty crowded. I didn't want to wear a top that's too delicate, especially because of the moshing at Andover... Since my outfit itself wasn't that interesting I paired it with fun accessories."

### EMILY NEY '27

"I wore this Aritzia Contour Line tube top [that] I got from my roommate... for my bottoms, I wore this skirt from Edikted and I wear it to everything. It's just a basic black mini skirt, it's really easy to adjust. It's a good material and comfortable. Something unique about my outfit was my jewelry. I like to wear the same necklace every day, and mine... has an E on it for Emily. And then for my earrings, I just got these new earrings for Christmas and they were these big hoop earrings and even though they were big hoops they weren't uncomfortable or anything."



### MAGGIE FULOP '26

"I wore Chentaitai pants I borrowed from my friend, a Miu Miu top from my mom, and Doc [Martens]. I'm on the Andover Edition board so I wanted something comfortable since I would be there a while to help set up the dance and man the photo booth. Since we're a magazine and we offer photoshoots, adding a theme to the dance was a way to make the dance more chic."

### JULIA SONG '26

"I wore black Miss Me jeans, a Diesel belt, and a lace baby-doll top. There are so many options for a cool outfit out there, but when there's a boundary placed on it, like the all-black theme, I actually find that you're able to come up with even more creative ideas that are outside of the box. For me, textures are something I experiment with, and different fabrics such as the contrast of lace and denim, and the contrast between gold jewelry and black. I think it's really fun to go to Bassment and see how people interpreted the theme."



## Senior Soloist Recital: Resounding Final Notes

### DANIEL LIU & ADEN HWANG

Last Friday, Emily Wu '25, Ellie Sun '25, and Brandon Fu '25 performed at the Senior Soloist Concert hosted in the newly-opened John Barry Hall at Falls Music Center. Wu performed various vocal tunes: "Skylark," a jazz standard; "Little Blue," a pop song; and "Stone or Lavender," an R&B and Soul song. Sun performed Édouard Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole*, a violin concerto. Finally, Fu performed Carl Maria Von Weber's *Clarinet Concerto No. 2*. This concert celebrated each soloists' work following the senior soloist competition earlier this school year on September 25.

Wu, versatile in a wide array of instruments and music genres, was satisfied with her performance, highlighting how this opportunity enabled her to show others her talent. She explained that despite her love for it, not many people have heard her singing, especially solo. Wu used this opportunity to show a new side of herself.

"The concert went really well — I had a lot of fun. For a lot of people, it was the first time they've heard me sing or heard me sing in a solo context, so I'm really glad that they got to watch me. I did feel a little underprepared because of the time restraint. But otherwise, I think the feedback was great and everyone had a lot of fun. It was

great," said Wu.

A violinist in the Phillips Academy Symphony and Chamber Orchestra and a percussionist in drumline, Sun highlights the strong relationships she has built at Andover through the music department. Sun first learned her repertoire in ninth grade after hearing her sister play the piece before her. In her Senior year, she reviewed the piece and prepared it for the concert.

"My sister also plays the violin, and I feel like the violin is a shared thing we both have. It feels very normal in our family to be both playing violin. When she plays a piece, it gets stuck in my head. A lot of the times I'm singing pieces that I never played. So for 'Lalo', it's a piece that I heard her playing. And I thought that it was a really cool piece; that made me want to play it," said Sun.

Fu, who has played clarinet since fourth grade, is heavily involved in many of Andover's bands, playing as principal clarinetist in the Academy Symphony Orchestra and wind ensemble. He also participates in many contemporary music ensembles on campus, such as The Repercussions and Goose & Moose, where he plays at various events and shows on campus alongside Wu who plays electric guitar and bass. These events range from small informal performances to larger events, such as an annual show in Susie's.

"We held a huge show in Susie's and basically just packed the house [with] bops. Every-



Brandon Fu '25 plays his clarinet in Falls Music Center.

H. ZHONG /THE PHILLIPIAN

one had a blast, we played for three hours straight over the course of two days. I think we had around 60 different songs. We were wearing pajamas with a coordinated outfit. We were chucking gummy worms into the [crowd] and pool noodles and stuff like that. It was really just my biggest accomplishment, something that represented to me that music can really connect people even if you know they have nothing to do with the music department," said Fu.

For audience members,

seeing their friends perform on stage was an experience of pride and awe. Ethan Liu '26, a close friend and ensemble-mate to all three performers, reflected on their growth as musicians. He shared how watching them play was both inspiring and moving.

"I knew each of them starting in my Freshman year, and I would say that going to this concert was eye-opening to reflect on how far each of them have come. All three of them have been so nice to me, given so much inspiration,

and taught me so much about how to be a musician and a person. Just going through performances with them, like practicing together before, all of these memories of my happiest moments at Andover have been with them. It's just been really lovely to be on this journey with them, and seeing them finally perform at this concert, was a good reflecting moment for me," said Liu.

# Arts & Leisure

The Phillipian

## Lunar New Year Celebration: A Night of Music, Food, and Tradition

MATTHEW WEI & CHARLIZE SOW

Students and faculty crowded into Kemper Auditorium to watch classmates sing and dance, performing everything from karaoke to traditional dances. With lively MCs and lion dances captivating the audience, the only thing that could distract from the talent show was the savory scent of Chinese dishes flowing in from the Underwood Room, ready to be devoured after the festivities were over.

Held on January 24, Andover's Lunar New Year event was a vibrant celebration of talent and tradition. Students took the stage with performances representing their Chinese classes or showcasing independent acts. Alongside the performances, a food festival — featuring dishes prepared by parents and local vendors — brought the community together through shared meals and cultural appreciation. Attendee Daniel Zhang '28 acknowledged how the event honored Chinese traditions, celebrated diversity, and strengthened connections within the Andover community.

"I would say the food festival definitely reminded me more of the spirit of the Chinese Lunar New Year Festival. I mean, people were all crowded around. I sat with my friends... [it] was just a really wholesome moment. I really enjoyed it because it was really warm inside too. I really enjoyed that warm fuzzy feeling that I'm surrounded by people who I love while celebrating my Chinese culture and heritage, while of course eating delicious food," said Zhang.

Zhang also reflected on his performance, highlighting the

variety of cultural acts that contributed to the vibrant and interactive atmosphere. He compared the festival to previous events and shared his enthusiasm for his favorite performances.

"[Alex Lin '28 and I], performed "Second Last," a Chinese piece, while doing flow ball light dancing to the singing. The performances I enjoyed the most were the ones where the whole class had a lot of energy. Additionally, a notable performance was when they played the traditional Chinese flute and the Guzheng, which is a traditional Chinese instrument, because those really exemplified the spirit of Chinese traditional cultural elements," said Zhang.

Similarly, Takunda Basvi '28 appreciated the cultural experience the celebration offered. She expressed her gratitude for the eye-opening event, and how it helped learn about new cultures.

"What I really took away from the festival is that just always have an open mind because I remember I feel like I wouldn't be able to get this type of diversity... if I was back in my hometown, I wouldn't be able to get this type of exposure to new things, and I just really learned to have an open mind to keep an open mind, especially throughout learning such like a new language like Chinese and then also trying different food. I just really learned that Chinese people are really welcoming, and they're really loving people," said Basvi.

The Lunar New Year celebration was not only an opportunity for new experience, but also a meaningful way for students to connect with their cultural roots. Krissy Zhu '28 shared how traditional foods, music, and treats reminded her of home and brought a



H. ZHONG /THE PHILLIPIAN

CHI540 students perform an original rap on stage.

sense of belonging to the Chinese community on campus.

"I was able to connect through aspects of my culture because there's so many Chinese parents helping there, and there [were] many traditional foods. The songs they played were traditional and old. I think in general, I was really able to connect with the Chinese community of Andover. My favorite dish is the tanghulu because it has been my favorite candy/dessert even when I'm at home in Shanghai, China. So tasting it here makes me really happy and made me feel that there's a community for people that celebrate Lunar New Year here," said Zhu.

This sentiment was shared by others, including Zhang, whose friend's parents catered traditional hotpot from Liu YiShou. The event featured many traditional dishes,

and Zhang expressed how the thoughtful food selections created an authentic experience for the Andover community to enjoy.

"The Chinese parents and the parents' association came really prepared. There was a really diverse range of food... tanghulu, fruit desserts, some dry desserts, some pastry desserts, and then there were also sweet desserts—there was this liquid containing a kind of clear boba. There were a lot of traditional Chinese dishes as you would find. Zehan's parents graciously brought Liu Yishou Huo Guo. Liu Yishou is a famous Chinese hotpot restaurant that you can actually find in Chinatown, and it's one of the most well-known Chinese hotpot restaurants, at least in the U.S, and it was kind of like this catering service by Liu YiShou, where they had like a simpler

version of a hotpot. It was really delicious, of course, because it was prepared by a restaurant, I believe," said Zhang.

While the event was well received by its participants, Zhang suggested improvements in space and timing for future celebrations, hoping for a more accessible and enjoyable space for everyone.

"If Andover has the resources, bringing the food section to a bigger space would definitely help because the line was really long, and it was like one guy guarding the entire line. So if there was a bigger space, more students could enjoy the event. I also didn't like how the senior recital was scheduled exactly at the same time as these two events because I would have liked to go to that senior performance as well," said Zhang.

## The Creative Journeys of Andover's THD902 Choreographers

HLUMA MANGCU

For the past couple of months, dancers Alex Giarnese '25, Tara Wei '25, and Jac Gordon '25 have been working tirelessly on their independent dance projects for Theatre and Dance 902 Advanced Studies in Dance Performance (THD902). This course offers students a unique opportunity to take full control over their creative process — from choreographing their own pieces to selecting dancers —allowing them to explore and develop their artistic ideas with complete autonomy.

For Wei, who has been part of various THD902 projects since her freshman year, the chance to choreograph her own piece has been a long-time dream. Finally seeing her ideas come to life on stage has been an incredibly fulfilling experience.

"Over the years, I've been compiling different movements and dance ideas so I can create my [THD] 902 this winter," she explained. "My favorite part of this [project] has been watching it actually

come to life. It's all existed in my head up until now, but since it's living through my dancers, I really get to see how they interpret my choreography and also how they want to show it off."

Wei's piece is rooted in the theme of unity and human connection, exploring how the most ordinary, often overlooked moments can leave lasting memories. Through her choreography, she experiments with different movements and shapes to convey how simple actions, when brought together, can form something meaningful.

"I wanted to highlight the mundane things in life and how the simple movements and simple acts really come together to make lasting memories," described Wei. "I wanted people in my dance to move together and be a part. I really wanted them to interact a lot and have a lot of movements that were simultaneous or just bounded together."

Giarnese's Sunset Sunrise is a deeply personal piece. Dedicated to his best friend Sarah, who passed away over a year ago, this piece reflects on the raw emotions of grief

and healing, hoping to express the journey in a way that resonates with others who have experienced similar pain.

"I wanted to do something to honor her, and her memory, so this piece is really special to me," Giarnese shared, "It follows the story of sadness, acceptance, and love, the three main components of a grieving person, and it tells the story of how everything can change in under a minute, or everything can change from sunset to sunrise"

Like Wei, Giarnese has been moved by the process of seeing his vision materialize on stage. The experience of translating his personal emotions into movement has been both rewarding and humbling, as he watches his choreography connect with his dancers in ways he hadn't anticipated.

"The best part about putting the entire show together is seeing my vision come to life and how well the dancers execute what I ask them to do. It's something special, that you don't realize is such a compelling feeling, to see something that's been in your head for so long actually

come alive on stage through real people," said Giarnese.

The process of putting his piece together has not been without challenges. With a diverse group of dancers, Giarnese faced the burden of unifying them into a cohesive performance.

"I think the hardest part has been taking so many dancers who have all different skill levels, and different experiences, and different styles that they enjoy, and putting them all together into one piece. [However], I think our group specifically has done a really good job at being unified and working together. It's a really interesting experience to compile a bunch of different dancers' experiences and styles and likes and dislikes into one piece." He explained

For Karishma Caro Del Castillo '25, Giarnese's close friend and frequent collaborator, this project has offered a new perspective. Having often worked alongside Giarnese to co-choreograph duets, Caro Del Castillo has appreciated stepping back and seeing his independent artistic process.

"It's been a really amazing process to be a part of just because Alex is an amazing choreographer with lots of experience in the contemporary dance world," Caro Del Castillo said. "It's just been really great to kind of be not in the seat of a co-choreographer and just be able to see where his artistic vision takes him," said Caro Del Castillo.

Giarnese's advice to future choreographers focuses on the importance of reflection and personal connection. He believes that every dance should tell a story, drawn from real-life experiences or emotional journeys.

"I would say tell a story. As a choreographer I love putting stories on stage. I think every dance should have some inspiration or something that it's drawn from and so I would say reflect on your own lived experiences or your friends lived experiences...really take time to be thoughtful because a really amazing piece can come about when you just take your time reflect and think about how your life has gone so far," shared Giarnese.

# Arts & Leisure

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## Ivy Randall’s Upcoming Directorial Debut: “Chicago”

ANNA TSVETKOV & NINA TORRENS

This term, Ivy Randall took on the exciting challenge of leading her own Theatre and Dance Advanced Practical Theatre Performance (THD901) project, a student-run theater production, choosing to direct the musical “Chicago”. Rehearsing throughout the Winter Term, she led a select-ed group of students in preparation for their culminating performance on March 2.

With a background in both dance and theater, Randall always wanted to direct a student performance. Randall shared that by selecting Chicago, a musical involving various dance sequences, she was able to combine both of her passions.

“I [always] knew I wanted to do a musical that I could incorporate some dance [into] since I’ve always wanted to do a THD902 and a THD901. So by doing a musical, a really dance-heavy musical, it was kind of like doing both. I think that was my main factor... I was also just keeping in mind the people that I thought I might want to cast and, like, all the dancers I have,” said Randall ’25.

Andover’s department musicals typically involve a director, a music director, a choreographer, and a costume designer. Randall, however, has had to juggle all of these responsibilities. Her primary duty has been to encourage her students to find joy throughout the process.

“Cast morale is probably my biggest job. My job as a director is to put on a good show. For me personally, one of my biggest goals is to also make sure that everybody is having fun with it. And in a way, I think that a good show comes from a cast that’s having fun and enjoying themselves. Because when people actually want to put in the work, you get a better show”, says Randall.

One of the actors in Randall’s 901, Estelle McClory ’28, testified to the sense of belonging that Randall fostered in the cast, and how she has stepped out of her comfort zone. From Chicago, McClory has learned to put in effort and have confidence on stage.

“The biggest lesson I’ve learned so far is, sometimes you just kind of have to go out there and do your best, even if it isn’t great, you’ve got to learn how to not be afraid of making mistakes. [The big-

gest challenge has been] kind of getting out of my comfort zone and trying to put my all into all the work, like the dances and stuff, kind of a lot, but I really like Ivy’s directing style. She makes everyone feel like they belong, and it’s just like a nice feeling,” says McClory.

Hunter Peabody ’27 commented on Randall’s directing style, believing she balances kindness with being authoritative. He elaborated on how this allows her to be approachable while also providing actors constructive criticism when they are not giving their all.

“She’s very kind and also knows how to get strict when she needs to, and I think that’s perfect for a director. You want a director who’s going to be approachable. You can ask their questions if you need clarification on anything. But also, if you’re not bringing your all and you’re not putting everything you can into this, then she’ll tell you, and she’ll tell you to step up, and I think that’s very important for a director. She’s very instructive with every decision she makes. She’ll tell you why she wants you to do this if you ask, and I think that’s very important,” says Peabody.



I. PADMAWAR/THE PHILLIPIAN

Ivy Randall ’25 in the Theatre Classroom.

## Oscar Nominations

TAYLA STEMPSON & DANIEL ZHANG

2024 was filled with plenty of talent, and the 97th Academy Awards, more commonly known as the Oscars, definitely reflects that. This year’s nominations were revealed on January 23rd at the Samuel Goldwyn Theater by Bowen Yang and Rachel Sennott. The official ceremony is set to air on March 2 at the Dolby Theater. The following categories are some of the biggest conversation pieces regarding this year’s nominees.

### BEST ACTOR

The Best Actor nominees feature standout performances, with Timothée Chalamet portraying Bob Dylan in “A Complete Unknown”, capturing the iconic musician’s pivotal career phase.

At 29, Chalamet becomes the youngest two-time Best Actor nominee since James Dean in 1957. Sebastian Stan earns a nomination for his role as a young Donald Trump in “The Apprentice”, marking him as the ninth actor recognized for portraying a U.S. president. Adrien Brody’s portrayal of a visionary architect in “The Brutalist” has been lauded for its depth and nuance, contributing to the film’s success.



A.GUO/THE PHILLIPIAN

### BEST PICTURE

Undoubtedly the most popular of the categories, the Best Picture nominee list is stacked with some big hitters this year. There were plenty of great selections, but “Wicked” being nominated was no surprise to anyone, as fans raved and rushed to theaters upon its release last November. “Dune: Part Two” was also quite expected, featuring renowned actors such as Timothée Chalamet and Zendaya [Coleman]. Unexpectedly, no actors or actresses were nominated for a role in “Dune: Part Two,” unlike in the case of “Wicked.”

### BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

In the Best Supporting Actor category, Edward Norton delivers a compelling performance in “A Complete Unknown”, portraying a key figure in Bob Dylan’s early career. Guy Pearce’s role in “The Brutalist” has been praised for its complexity and emotional depth, adding significant weight to the narrative. Jeremy Strong’s portrayal of lawyer Roy Cohn in The Apprentice has also garnered critical acclaim, highlighting his versatility and commitment to challenging roles

### BEST DIRECTOR

In the Best Director category, Jacques Audiard is celebrated for his innovative storytelling and direction in “Emilia Pérez”, contributing significantly to its record-breaking nominations.

Brady Corbet’s meticulous attention to detail and compelling narrative style in The Brutalist have been instrumental in the film’s critical acclaim. James Mangold is recognized for his dynamic storytelling and character development in “A Complete Unknown”, a biopic exploring Bob Dylan’s transition to rock music.

### BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

In the Best Supporting Actress category, Ariana Grande has received her first Oscar nomination for her portrayal of Glinda in “Wicked”. Her performance has been lauded for its charm and vocal excellence, marking a significant milestone in her transition from music to film. Monica Barbaro is nominated for her role in “A Complete Unknown”, where she delivers a compelling performance that has garnered critical acclaim. Felicity Jones earns a nomination for “The Brutalist”, with her portrayal adding depth and nuance to the historical drama.

### BEST ACTRESS

In the Best Actress category, Karla Sofia Gascón delivers a powerful performance as the titular character in “Emilia Pérez”, making history as the first openly transgender performer nominated for an acting category. Cynthia Erivo is recognized for her role as Elphaba in “Wicked”, bringing emotional depth and vocal prowess to the character. Fernanda Torres earns a nomination for her portrayal of Eunice Paiva in I’m Still Here, becoming the second Brazilian performer nominated for Best Actress, following her mother, Fernanda Montenegro, in 1999.

### VISUAL EFFECTS

As a bonus category– we included cinematography, a category that was well-picked this year. “Wicked” is a great contender. The lack of CGI (Computer Generated Imagery) and the intricate set designs make for a vibrant world that the camera captures excellently. “Wicked” is going to be a tough one to beat. In contrast, “Kingdom of the Plant of the Apes” uses CGI enhancements to create a vast natural world with intricate details. However, both movies have great chances and even greater visual effects.

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