

Class Assassin Continues Amongst the Most Dedicated of Contestants



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY K.MA/THE PHILLIPIAN

NIKI TAVAKOLI &
KRISSEY ZHU

For weeks now students have walked around campus with pillows taped to their chests, newspapers in their hands, and have not used their phones at all throughout the school days. For the most dedicated Class Assassin competitors, these are necessary measures to avoid being caught off guard and eliminated. Class Assassin is a long-standing game in which contestants are assigned a target in their grade. In order to eliminate their targets, students must photograph their opponents in a specific action, such as using their phone or without a specified object. Behind the scenes, Class Assassin is a large-scale operation, with emails frequently going out about new targets and challenges, and frequent updates on Instagram regarding recent

eliminations. As the game progresses, challenges have become more extreme and players have become more intense. Satabhisha Sarkar '27, a member of her class's top 8 assassins, spoke on how her approach to the game has shifted since the start of the challenge. "At first, when the rules were things like you have to be holding onto *The Phillipian* or you can't be on your phone, I was like I am going to very stubbornly follow these rules... We recently hit the top 12 and that's when [the organizers] encouraged us to figure out who the other players were," said Sarkar. She continued, "It implied that you should now start planning around who our opponents are [and] who our potential assassins could be... We then started interacting with the [other] players a bit more, and I've heard of certain partnerships and interactions between players." Class Assassin also provides

a way for students to meet new people in their grade and acts as a commonality. Sarkar was one student who mentioned this, noting how it's become integrated in many of her friendships. "It's really something that a lot of people are following. I don't know about other grades, but at least in the Class of 27 and in my friend group, I've found that a lot of people are invested in the game, even though they're not playing, because their friends are in the game. As it gets more high stakes, people realize 'this is serious,' [or] 'so and so's a really good player.' It gives us something to talk about, almost like a shared hobby, and kind of bridges the gap between our differences by giving us a common interest," said Sarkar. Representatives from the Class of '27 created a variety of

Continued on A5, Column 1

Head of School Raynard Kington Invites Jack Buckley for Fireside Chat at ASM

SAKETH LINGISETTY

Andover invited Sean P. "Jack" Buckley, Vice President of People at Roblox, to engage in a fireside chat with Head of School Raynard Kington during last Friday's All-School Meeting (ASM). Drawing on his work with educational assessments, namely the SAT, Buckley discussed the future of standardized testing, and the use of game-based assessments to evaluate talent in professional settings. Prior to joining Roblox, Buckley had a diverse career path, ranging from working in the U.S. Navy as a security officer to helping lead the redesign of the SAT as Vice President of Research on The College Board. A central focus of the ASM conversation was the thought process behind improv-

ing student achievement by making job and college evaluations more equitable. Buckley elaborated on the challenges of making standardized testing as accurate and fair as possible. "What I like to say and truly believe is that selecting people for a job or college with a standardized test is the worst way to select them, except for all the other ways. I say that because when you get rid of them, most of the other systems that people invent are not more fair. You lose the ability to even monitor them. Inevitably, people reinvent them. The more you really dig into the research of using standardized assessments correctly, you can't find a better way to make a system more fair."

Continued on A5, Column 3



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Head of School Raynard Kington and Roblox Vice President Sean P. Buckley played Roblox at All-School Meeting.

Dodgeball Tournament at Winter Cluster Olympics



N. AMIN/THE PHILLIPIAN

Flagstaff Cluster students huddled up before their dodgeball match.

CHRISTIAN ESTRADA &
AZUL CABRERA

Andover faculty battled head to head against students this past weekend in an intense dodgeball match. The exhibition match was just one attraction in this Winter's Cluster Olympics Event. Clusters had the opportunity to earn points by competing in a round-robin dodgeball tournament with two divisions for lower and upper classmen. Each cluster competed in the tournament, with Flagstaff emerging victorious. The event also included a range of food for students, music, and a photo booth. One attendee Ryan Tran '28 reflected on the event, commenting on the exciting atmosphere. He explained how the crowd intensified the games, contributing to the liveliness of the event. "It was really fun. There was a lot of energy going around. Some clusters were more into it than others, but overall, everyone showed a lot of enthusiasm. The games were exciting, and I think the food was a great addition. Overall, it was a really fun time... I'd definitely do it again next year."

The energy, the competition, and just getting to play with friends made it a great experience," said Tran. He continued, "The most exciting moment was when Maddy Shin won a 'One v Three' against Brady [Kanter '27], Max Panda [27], and Teo [Choi '27]. It was intense because the odds were stacked against her, but she pulled it off with quick reflexes and smart dodging. Everyone watching was cheering, and it was one of those moments that made the tournament so exciting." Aya Murata, event organizer and Assistant Dean of Students, took inspiration for the dodgeball tournament from a faculty-student dodgeball event that used to happen over ten years ago. After the success of Fall's Cluster Olympics, Murata decided to attempt to revive the event. "I had low expectations and was worried. With new events, you never know. [Parents of Students at Phillips Academy] spent a lot on food, and I didn't want them to feel like their effort was wasted. Also, campus engagement has been low lately. I wasn't sure if dodgeball would appeal to students. But a couple hundred students showed up at some point

during the night," said Murata. Comparing the Winter's Cluster Olympics event to the one that happened back in the Fall, Murata described how the intentions varied. "The fall event was about community and relationships. This was just about having fun — good food, friends, cluster pride, and some friendly competition. That was the only goal, and it worked," said Murata. "The energy in the gym was great. It was fun, competitive, and had that school spirit. The food was a big hit too." A resident of Alice Whitney House, Sarah Bae '26 noted how the majority of her dorm went to the event. She explained how the event served almost as a dorm bonding event and allowed her to connect to other dorms nearby. "I would totally participate next year, because I feel Abbott needs to redeem itself, and hopefully we can build a better team with more notice," said Bae. "A lot of my dorm and our neighbor dorm, Stowe [House], were participating on our team. So I just thought getting to play with people we lived so close to and literally live with was very fun."

Sustainability Scholar Sophia Tabibian '26 Explores Flood Mitigation in Pakistan

SOPHIA TOLOKH &
JENNA LIANG

Inspired by an entrepreneur from Pakistan and their work on possible flood mitigation measures in their country, Sophia Tabibian '26 took the stage in Kemper Auditorium last Friday for her Sustainability Scholar presentation. Tabibian's talk was titled "Financing Flood Risk Mitigation: Provincial Autonomy and Climate Investing in Pakistan." Tabibian addressed the increasing severity of flooding in Pakistan. She explored factors behind the declining response system, including ineffective fiscal policies, mismanaged tax revenues, and language barriers. "Right now, flood warning

systems have very poor infrastructure, and they also aren't specific to the local regions. For example, there are a lot of farming communities that have their own local dialects, and it's hard to translate the warnings into their languages. Building up the infrastructure of local warning systems specific to each community is incredibly important. What we also see is that a lot of people who leave rural areas and go into cities during floods often have no employment opportunities because the cities are just strained with so many farmers who are leaving the rural areas [and have to return to] their farms, which have been destroyed by the floods," said Tabibian.

Continued on A5, Column 3



K.MA/THE PHILLIPIAN

Sophia Tabibian '26 spoke about flooding issues in Pakistan, bridging research to reality.

Commentary, A2

All-School Meeting

In "The Quest for 'Non Sibi,'" Vedant Bajaj talks about balancing self-interest and selflessness.

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Day in the Liphe
Phailed Rephlection

Sports, B1

Clusterball

Clusterball, a Winter-Term L.I.F.E. sport for Uppers and Seniors, blends rivalries and camaraderie. The sport culminated on Tuesday following an overtime battle between the Green and Red teams.

Arts, B6

"Black People Got Talent"

Read about the annual "Black People Got Talent" talent show, in which community members came together to celebrate the diverse talents of Black studnets on campus

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Editorial

Game On

For many, classic video games like Subway Surfers, Candy Crush, and 2048 are a staple of their childhoods. Characterized by flashy visuals and simple, repetitive gameplay, these games captivated players worldwide, luring millions into spending countless hours to beat the next level or reach a new high score. Today, these types of games have maintained their popularity, yet acquired a new name; we now describe them with the new Gen-Z phenomenon: “brain rot.” “Brain rot” — the 2024 Oxford Word of the Year — can be vaguely described as low-value, low-quality internet content that encourages hyperconsumption, to the point that it negatively affects our cognitive abilities — literally rotting our brains with overexposure to meaningless content. Every once in a while, another game becomes the new trend and takes over the internet and our campus. The frequency with which these obscure games rocket their way to virality prompt us to ask, “Why does this happen?”

The appeal is simplicity. Brain rot games are designed with a elementary premise; in Block Blast, it's to fill a row or column by dragging and dropping shapes; in 2048, it's to swipe and merge tiles to attain a 2048 tile; in the viral watermelon game, it's to combine matching fruits to create watermelons. More importantly, these games often have no definitive end, or a clear, attainable win condition. Instead, they feature rapid “checkpoints,” whether that's clearing another row of blocks or passing the next obstacle, and constantly provide small dopamine rushes to keep players engaged.

Furthermore, with simple mechanics and the convenience of not requiring an internet connection, these games serve as a low-commitment option to fill up brief moments of idleness. It's easy for us to spontaneously continue or begin a new game in between classes or during late nights; but minutes quickly melt into hours and, and before you know it, you've spent the past hour playing Tetris. While these games seem like a harmless way to pass time, they provide a shallow sense of accomplishment that can create a cycle of addiction and procrastination.

In Andover's naturally high-stress academic environment, we are incentivized to seek ways to escape the pressure. Complete stillness is

anxiety-inducing; procrastination becomes a source of relief. As much as they relieve boredom, games also offer a casual outlet for competition, another channel for the competitive spirit many students possess.

Much like doom-scrolling on social media, brain rot games allow us to mindlessly engage in an activity. They're just interesting enough to stimulate our senses, but not challenging enough to keep us cognitively engaged. On social media, we are passively receiving information; playing brain rot games, we are immersed in a colorful game with simple tasks. However, there is a distinction to be made between brain rot games and social media. Social media allows people to connect with one another, receive information on current affairs, and engage with trends worldwide. On the other hand, brain rot games are almost exclusively single-player, further increasing detachment from the surrounding world. They hinder connection. Instead of using conversation with others to combat boredom, we instead rely on these games.

This habit of mindless consumption is not true self-care, nor a sustainable solution to stress. Although escaping from the pressure of responsibility provides relief in the moment, we can quickly become consumed in these addictive activities which can leave us feeling drained, guilty, and even more stressed. Recent suggestions have been made to external regulation of our phone usage. However, the core of the issue lies in the culture of constant need for stimulus. As winter winds mellow into spring breezes, the start of a new term offers a good opportunity to rethink our habits and consider healthier ways to spend empty time. If Block Blast has become your go-to escape, consider enjoying the sunshine instead. With constant entertainment at our fingertips, we have to take a step back to more thoughtfully manage the precious snippets of our free time. It can make all the difference.

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

The Quest for ‘Non Sibi’

VEDANT BAJAJ



Due to the ambitious nature of many Andover students, much of our community operates under the belief that success must be valued above all. Many students believe that ambition is directly proportional to a student's growth — those who relentlessly push their limits are more likely to succeed. While this mindset does help students excel, it also prompts them to disregard our school's core principle: Non sibi - ‘not for self,’ ultimately leading to harm for the overall community. Non sibi itself is important to uphold as it shows us the importance of community and strengthening our connections by creating a culture of empathy and support. Even before the first days of school, many faculty reinforce the idea that Andover is all about the people. Non sibi itself is a way to guide students towards helping, and consequently, lead to the well-being of all. To thrive in a place like Andover,

students must actively seek out a balance between pursuing their personal ambition and their responsibility to care for others, as this not only fosters personal growth but also strengthens the entire community.

Ambition does not come without reason. Andover is known to be rigorous, thus attracting many ambitious people to apply. The extreme competition at Andover pushes students to act on their self-interest, rather than for the good of others, as a way to emerge on top. For example, college admissions at Andover are incredibly intense due to the talented student body dedicating a great amount of time and effort to go to the right college. This environment pushes students to their limits, which can strengthen their work ethic and resilience. Yet the constant competition, debilitating amount of work, and the pressure to over perform cause Andover students to prioritize their individual goals over community service and helping others, especially in comparison to a stress-free environment. Instead, the attention and appeal shift to more ‘quantifiable’ acts. For instance, grades, awards, and titles. These measures are held in the limelight and are more ideal than selfless acts, as many students do not realize that both can be equally powerful and acted upon at the same time. As a result, when students prioritize the quantifiable acts, they oppose the principles of Non sibi, which is the very foun-

dation of this school.

However, what most people do not realize is that self-interest does not inherently contradict Non sibi they can both be fulfilled when balanced. One example of this can be seen in community service projects. Community service projects usually start out as selfless acts, but can also help students themselves, all while benefiting others. For instance the school led community service programs. This obviously helps the community through various different programs- this is the epitome of Non sibi. For instance, people across the world who receive this support are often able to gain hope and even overcome challenges, and they are immensely impacted by kind actions. Community service also provides benefits that come naturally with selfless acts. For example, it could encourage your personal growth, such as leadership and teamwork skills. These skills are essential in future careers, contributing to personal success. Yet, you are able to reap these skills while also serving your community. Success isn't always individual; rather it can be measured on how you help others. By this definition of success, personal and collective achievements will always intertwine.

Some ways Andover students can integrate both aspects into their lives are in the form of peer tutoring. By tutoring their peers, students can improve their intellectual skills



MIA WALKER / THE PHILLIPIAN

and teaching abilities while also mentoring and helping others in the process. Another example is residential positions like prefects and proctors. In these positions, you can help mentor younger students while gaining leadership and authoritative skills. A final example can be much simpler acts such as helping your friends with their tasks or picking up trash around campus. These subtle things can help you improve your sense of responsibility and empathy. There are countless ways Andover students can help serve their community while still building the necessary skills for their future success.

Selflessness and personal success are not mutually exclusive. Together, they illustrate that the idea of Non sibi doesn't necessitate complete self-sacrifice — it does not

mean to help others all the time while forsaking your gains — it means to balance your personal success while contributing to something larger. At a competitive place like Andover, we are pushed toward self-interest. Yet, there are many meaningful and fulfilling ways to serve the community in the process. The real challenge is redirecting ambition to align with Andover's values. The quest for ‘not for self,’ can lead to personal and collective success so long as we recognize the importance of balance between ambition and selflessness.

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CORRECTIONS:
The photo for “Brace Fellow Maddie Redmond ‘25 Sheds Light on Black Women in Rap” was taken by Audrey Baeten-Ruffo.
Wendi Wei is the author for “Fashion Through the Ages: Great Gatsby-Themed Outfits at Casino Night.”
The photo for the article “Indoor Track Hosts NEPSTA All-Corners on Saturday, Renews Andover-Exeter Rivalry on Wednesday, and Sees School Records Broken” was taken by Elliot Chai.
The wrong illustration was paired with “The Cultural Erosion of India.”
Denys Tereshchenko's surname was incorrectly spelled “Tereschenko” in International Student Travels Article.

The Phillipian regrets these errors.

A CIA Analyst, the Head of School, and a Five-Second Roblox Demo

PHILIP JEONG



A.LE / THE PHILLIPIAN

Last Friday, Dr. Raynard Kington sat before the school, hundreds of students watching in anticipation. A click. A pause. And then — there it was. A Roblox game. For a moment, the entire student body straightened in their seats. Was this really happening? The Head of School was about to play Roblox on the big screen. But just as quickly as the moment arrived, it vanished. After barely touching the keyboard, Dr. Kington passed the computer to a volunteer, and the game faded into the background as the fireside chat resumed — another surface-level conversation, another wasted opportunity. This was the All-School Meeting (ASM) that prom-

ised engagement but delivered little more than an anti-climactic spectacle — brief, attention-grabbing, and ultimately empty. Andover had in front of it Dr. Jack Buckley — CIA analyst, Navy nuclear reactor engineer, former Commissioner of National Education Statistics, Senior VP at the College Board, and now VP of People Science at Roblox. This was a man who has led research shaping national education policy, redesigned the SAT, and pioneered data-driven hiring in one of the largest tech companies in the world. This ASM had all the makings of something great. A high-profile guest speaker, a new conversational format, a game projected on the big screen — everything pointed to something engaging and fresh. The game, Kaiju Cat, was meant to illustrate how Roblox uses game-based assessments in hiring. But rather than diving into how companies like Roblox are revolutionizing talent evaluation, we watched as a volunteer casually played in the background while the conversation remained frustratingly surface-level. Let's put this in perspective. Dr. Buckley isn't just an-

other corporate VP. He has served as a CIA Analyst, an engineer for Navy nuclear reactors, and the Commissioner for National Education Statistics. At the College Board, he helped redesign the SAT, and now, at Roblox, he's shaping the future of data-driven hiring. This is a man who could have spoken about leadership, education reform, analytics — or even intelligence work. He could have spoken about how data science is reshaping hiring at major companies, the future of education and standardized testing, or even lessons of discipline and grit from working in the CIA, the military, and corporate America. Instead, we got a chat that only scratched the surface—focusing on broad, predictable topics rather than taking advantage of Dr. Buckley's expertise. Instead of diving into his work in education reform or the complexities of data-driven hiring, the conversation lingered on vague career advice and general observations about workplace culture. These were insightful but not the kind of discussion that fully utilized a speaker of his caliber. It wasn't just the anti-climactic moment that made this ASM fall flat. The format actively contributed to the distraction. By projecting the Roblox game on the big screen, the school essentially encouraged students to hop on their devices and join the game. And they did—flooding the server with messages and emotes, spamming in front of the screen. This led to one of the most bizarre ASM consequences in recent memory: over 40 phones confiscated. An iPad, too. Given the circumstances, this outcome was almost inevitable. You cannot take a school full of hyper-online students, put a multiplayer game on a massive projector, and expect them to just sit there and watch. It's like

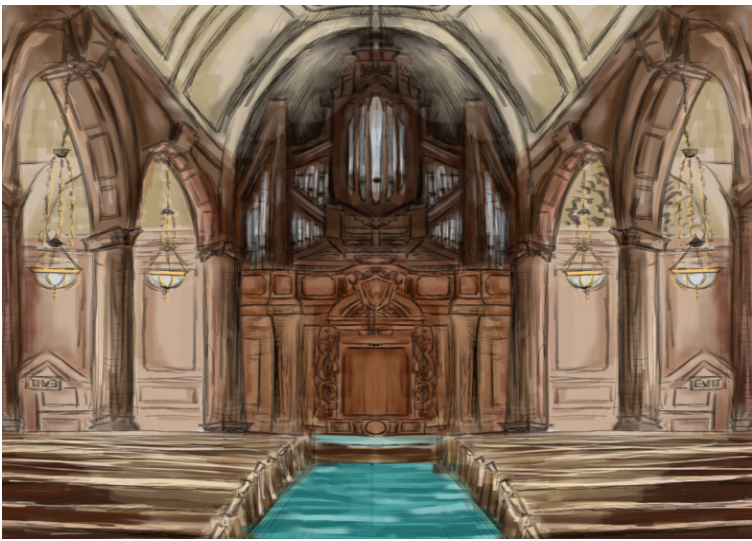
dropping food in a koi pond and being shocked when the fish swarm. This ASM raises a bigger question: What exactly is the purpose of All-School Meetings? If ASMs are supposed to be intellectually enriching, then they should leave students with new ideas to think about—not a game demo that overshadows the discussion. If they're supposed to be engaging, then the format should actively encourage insightful discourse among the community, rather than create an accidental distraction. If they're supposed to be community-driven, then why not involve students in shaping them? A simple post, or a survey on ASM could help the administration understand what works and what doesn't, so moments like this aren't just a waste of potential. There's something fundamentally broken when we have a top-tier guest speaker and somehow manage to walk away with nothing memorable — except the moment our Head of School played Roblox for five seconds.

Maybe that's the real frustration. There was potential for something meaningful, but it never materialized.

This isn't a complaint—it's a demand for better. We deserve ASMs that don't just fill time but actually mean something. We deserve speakers who are fully utilized, conversations that go beyond the surface, and engagement that doesn't feel like empty hype. Some ASMs stick with us — though not always for the right reasons. When someone declared, "You are not your politics" right be-

fore the presidential election, it didn't just ignite a series of memes, it also sparked genuine debate about identity and civic engagement. When Olympic swimmer Andrew Wilson told us to stop stressing over grades, his message may have not transformed the student body overnight, but it did make people pause and reflect briefly. Those ASMs challenged us. They left us something to wrestle with. This one? It got people talking, but only about how many phones were confiscated and how underwhelming the Roblox demo was. The discourse that followed wasn't about ideas — it was about the distractions. That's what made this ASM frustrating — it had the same potential, but it didn't deliver. A speaker of Dr. Buckley's caliber could have left us with lessons on leadership, education, or even intelligence work. In the conversations I had afterward, most of what I heard wasn't about Dr. Buckley's insights, but about the phones that got confiscated and the fleeting Roblox demo. While some students may have taken away more, the general response seemed to focus more on the spectacle than the substance. And maybe that's the real frustration. There was potential for something meaningful, but it never materialized. A speaker of Dr. Buckley's caliber could have left us with lessons on leadership, education, or even intelligence work. Instead, the conversation afterward wasn't about new ideas or thought-provoking discussions — it was about what could have been.

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CARINA PAIK / THE PHILLIPIAN

The Relevance of a Century-Old Play

ALEXANDRA LIN



N.AMIN / THE PHILLIPIAN

All-School Meeting was abruptly halted last Friday as protesters flooded from their chapel seats to the stage. Armed with megaphones, they loudly rebuked...robot mistreatment? Fortunately, these students, including myself, were not actually protesters, but instead the cast of the Theatre & Dance Play Production (THD921) play, "Rossum's Universal Robots" (R.U.R.). R.U.R is a play written in 1921 by Czech playwright Karel Capek, famous for introducing the term "robot" into modern-day terminology (funnily enough, it stemmed from the Czech word "robot," which means "forced labor"). In essence, "R.U.R" explores a world where human labor is replaced by sentient "robots," and the circumstances driving them to an eventual uprising. The version we were performing had been adapted to fit modern times by Dr. Natalia Baldyga, a History and Theatre teacher at Andover. I still remember sitting around a table with the rest of the cast, doing the very first read-

through of the script, and thinking: 'Is this really a century-old play?' "R.U.R." opened my eyes to how long certain questions had been plaguing humanity. For example, is the pursuit of knowledge and progress eventually going to turn against us? A main concern raised within the play is whether the relief of the burden of hard labour is liberating mankind, or is dooming it to regress. Now, a century later, Capek's play is read through a very different lens. Dr. Rossum's fictional man-made intelligence has been dragged out of the realm of science fiction and taken its baby steps into reality. Although we don't have a robot workforce, the emergence

of accessible artificial intelligence has sent ripples across communities, ranging from schools panicking over students using chatbots dishonestly to individuals concerned about the futures of their careers. The impacts of artificial intelligence are complicated. In the academic setting alone, it has provided a lot of convenience. Students can now use generative chatbots as a tool to enhance and further personalize their learning, such as ChatGPT to explain concepts in confusing topics or provide feedback on writing. Teachers, too, use generative AI to create quizzes and lesson plans based on an outline that they provide. However, there is another side to this coin: students can use generative AI to create work that they then submit as their own. This practice is blatantly academically dishonest and defeats the learning experience of doing that work in the first place. It is surprisingly like the issue raised in "R.U.R.", and an issue that constantly returns to us at any technological revolution: is artificial intelligence a tool to support our learning and development, or is it a crutch that will hinder our abil-

ity to think and act without it? The initial response of academic communities towards chatbots is understandable: panic, and attempt to shut it down. However, despite all the negatives to chatbots, I don't believe that it's neither right nor is it plausible to eliminate artificial intelligence from the academic setting. Though the future is cloudy, it's clear that artificial intelligence isn't going away anytime soon, and we must learn to adapt to it. I believe that promoting understanding and conversation is integral to adapting to rapidly changing technologies. Firstly, adaptation cannot happen without understanding what we are adapting to. There should be more of an emphasis on educating teachers and students alike on how chatbots and other such artificial intelligence work, removing the mystery and misconceptions around generative AI. Additionally, every individual has different perspectives and views on artificial intelligence. A teacher's opinions on artificial intelligence will differ from those of a student, and no perspective is better than another. For our community to develop fair stances and policies on artificial intelligence, communication and compromise are essential. What better way to inspire thought and promote meaningful conversation than through stories? Performing arts, fine arts, and creative writing, are all forms of storytelling. Historically, humans have been attracted to stories because of their ability to speak not only to the mind but the heart. Stories have

the power to shape the views of a community, and stories stick with us. They linger, whether we notice or not, widening our perspectives and reappearing in our day-to-day conversations. They linger, even after a century, because they speak to a cross-section between our logic and our imagination, as we look to interpret the past and piece together the future. They linger because they ask questions that have always been relevant and will always remain relevant, from the past to the present to the future. Stories have historically been used to raise awareness, spark conversation, and comment on the state of the world, and "R.U.R." is no different. Although "R.U.R." is a century old, the play, along with many other stories, is especially important in our modern times. Our THD921 rehearsals are filled to the brim with conversations birthed from this science-fiction tale, that branch out to current affairs, academic behaviors in the context of artificial intelligence, and so much more! This play will encourage discourse surrounding the way our academic community and society are adapting to improved technologies, and hopefully inspire a chain of more perspectives, more conversation, and more stories.

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MIA WALKER / THE PHILLIPIAN



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Response to “How Meritocracy Undermines Society and Humanity”

Recently *The Phillipian* contained a Commentary article by Emma Hong entitled “How Meritocracy Undermines Society and Humanity.”

Hong attempts to explain the supposed evils of meritocracy. Her article is full of false assumptions about human nature and unsubstantiated claims. She does not give one example to support her thesis.

Hong writes that in a meritocracy the rewards of life may not be distributed evenly. Of course, they are not. Life is inherently unfair. She mentions some rewards that people strive for: “money, power, careers, etc.” What about a happy marriage, raising children, enjoying friends, and

reading a good book? There is more to life than what she suggests and many accomplished people do not care about money and power. Example: I know a man with a law degree from Yale who defends people who have run afoul with the corrupt police and politicians in his city. He is not getting rich but enjoys wonderful job satisfaction.

Further, the author says that the meritocracy wouldn’t necessarily reward people for their hard work. Right. Hard work without results may not merit reward.

Next, is the “birth lottery.” Most of us would probably do better if we had chosen our parents more wisely. I suspect that most of the students

at Andover chose bright parents or else they would be at some lesser school. But Hong says that because of the lottery, “It cannot be denied that this perpetuates inequality.” I can name dozens of people who lost the birth lottery but have come out on top. Oprah Winfrey, George Soros, Howard Schultz (Starbucks), Jeff Bezos and Ralph Lauren come to mind.

Later Hong states that “meritocracy would inevitably enforce a uniform and complete lack of work-life balance.” Why does a meritocracy enforce a lack of balance in one’s life? Modern companies are acutely aware that a burned out employee does not help the bottom line.

She mentions people who derive satisfaction from contributing to their community. Good. However, she claims that in a meritocracy they would be “alienated and undervalued.” Why? No explanation. She then goes on to say that meritocracy “dehumanizes individuals by reducing them to their “merit.” Does that mean that Jimmy Fallon has been dehumanized because he “merited” the Tonight Show?

Near the end, she claims that “meritocracy promotes an arrogant, self-serving worldview that disregards the importance of community.” I suppose that means that President Jimmy Carter became arrogant by working for

Habitat for Humanity after he merited the White House.

Hong has missed so many points. What about the pride of a job well done? Or a sense of achievement by completing a tough course? Or the fun of competition? Competition makes us all better.

Finally, Hong misses one other point: She offers no solutions. If not meritocracy, then what?

Signed,
William Kelley

Response to “The Cultural Erosion of India”

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to the Editor of *The Phillipian* regarding the article “The Cultural Erosion of India,” dated 21 February 2025, authored by Mr. Vedant Bajaj.

While Mr. Bajaj, in his article, seems to regard Westernization as an “imminent threat” to India, I respectfully propose a view in opposition.

India is a global leader in the Information Technology (IT) sector. It is estimated by the World Bank that the Indian IT sector generated approximately 245 billion USD in revenue for 2023. This represents approximately 7 percent of the total GDP of the country.

Given that the IT industry depends on the existence of advancements in modern computing and the internet, the positive role of globalization in every economy, including that of India, must not be overlooked.

For instance, the first computer was invented by Mr. Charles Babbage and the internet protocol was developed by Sir Tim Berners-Lee.

Both inventors are British nationals, so I would assume this would fall into the realms of “Westernization” as defined by Mr. Bajaj. Yet, had India failed to embrace these innovations under the raison d’être of cultural preservation, the nation may not have evolved into the IT powerhouse of today.

I come into agreement with the statement by Mr. Bajaj that globalization does result in certain challenges, in particular to matters of heritage and culture. However, I believe that it is still correct to note that globalization has engendered significant cultural benefits to every country. For the case of India, globalization has allowed for the export of Indian identity and culture to a global audience.

Notably, Indian cinema, colloquially defined as “Bollywood” due to its likeness to Hollywood, has captivated audiences across the world. The film RRR, for instance, has garnered accolades from distinguished institutions of film such as in the 80th Golden Globe Awards.

Moreover, private companies like that of T-Series have successfully introduced products of the Indian entertainment industry to millions of international fans.

To conclude my letter, I would regard that this article in question fails to provide readers with adequate and comprehensive context by neglecting the beneficial impacts of globalization.

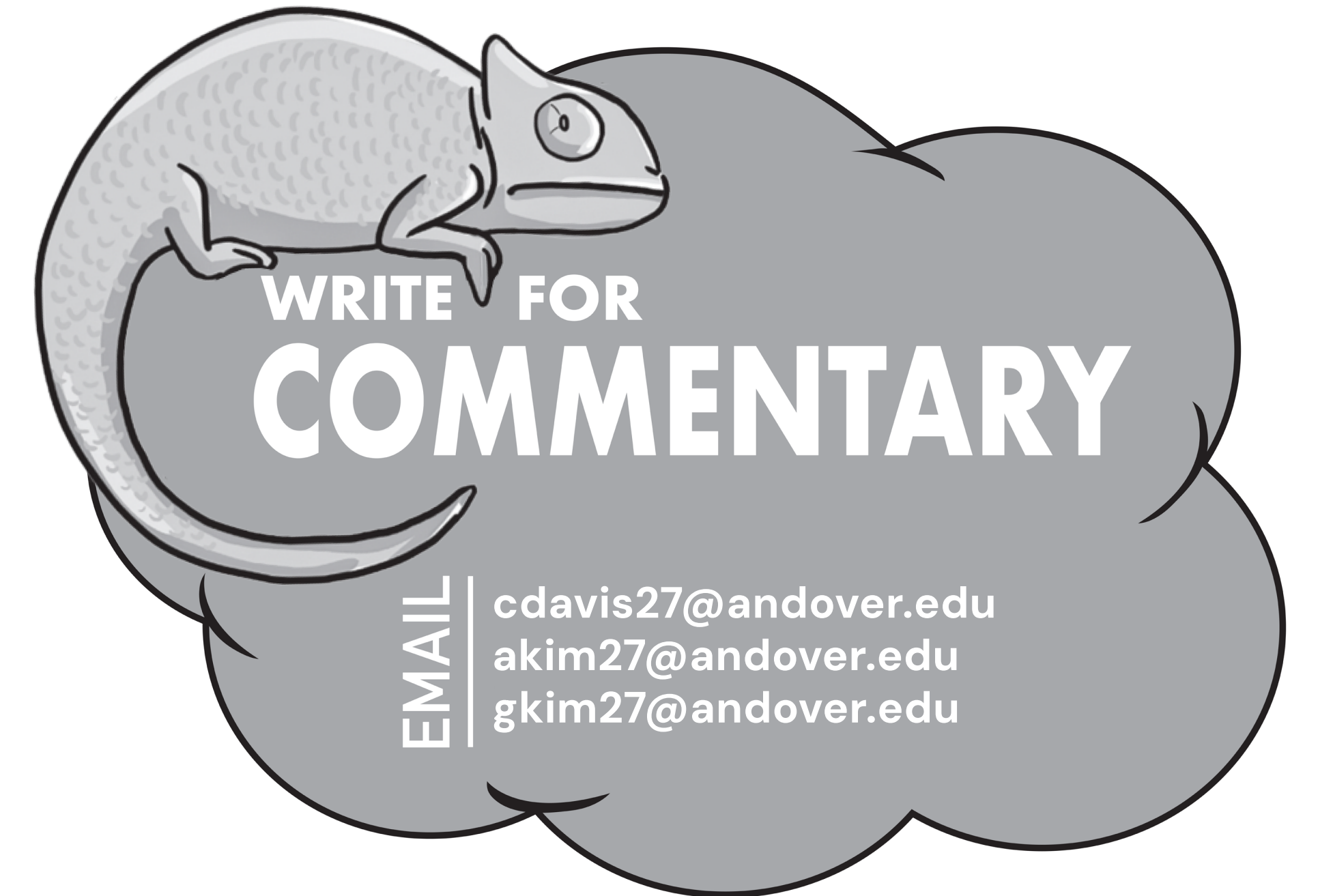
While globalization does have deep and intrinsic links to the dark legacy of imperialism and colonialism, thereby leading to the creation of the word “Westernization” to describe a cultural outcome of contemporary globalization, I believe that the readers

should also be well-noted in its benefits.

It is my opinion that the perspective presented in the aforementioned writing of Mr. Bajaj is narrow and fragmented, overlooking the indispensable role of globalization in creating a more connected, and thereby a more prosperous world for all.

I believe that no country can thrive under a policy of isolation: history itself has proven that such doctrine of governance is ineffective. Globalization is simply the sine qua non for the nations of today to achieve success and ensure the prosperity for its people.

Signed,
Jaewon Choi ’28



“Ride the Cyclone” Took to The Stage This Past Weekend



H.ZHONG/THE PHILLIPIAN

Soren Heinz '28 performed in “Ride the Cyclone,” held in Black Box Theater in George Washington Hall.

Class Assassin Creates Friendly Competition

Continued from A5, Column 3

fun challenges for a more compelling event. Patrick Xu '27, one Representative, shared the strategizing process for coming up with unique challenges.

“The phone [aspect] was brought back from last year. We really enjoyed it, and then I think we just wanted to get creative, trying to make it more difficult each time. So we had the newspaper one, and then we saw lots of strategies from there, and then we kind of continued to make it more difficult... And then most recently, [you] had to catch someone walking through a doorway. And we had to implement that one because the remaining people were getting too good at carrying things around, because you're going to have to go through a doorway during your day,” said Xu.

Ozochi Onunaku '25, a Senior class representative and an organizer of the Class of 25 Assassin game, spoke on the varied communication methods used to run the game, emphasizing its sophistication.

“[Student Body Co-President] Nate Liang '25 has created this website that makes the process of logging in kills and sending out emails [easier]. It's very quick and efficient. We also send out updates on who gets killed on our Instagram, as well as updates on the amount of

kills for today, who's the biggest murderer in the grade or who's had the most kills, and then like any reminders,” said Onunaku.

“We try to make it as equitable as possible. Let's hypothetically say a person doesn't have social media, then we update them on Outlook.”

Anny Wang '26, a student representative for her class and an organizer of Upper Class Assassins, elaborated on Friendly Assassins, a spin-off initiative started by fellow class representative Frank Hu '26 where students get paired to complete challenges together. She explained how it's aimed to bond students and create an environment for connection and friendly assassination.

“The normal assassins is really fun because it's competitive and also you get to the main objective is that you get to know people who you maybe never talk to in order to assassinate them... We thought that normal assassins could be a little exclusive because once you're out you don't really have a chance to keep going in this game. You're not able to keep getting to know people so we wanted to create this friendly assassins where people work together and really bond over the task that you have to do. We really wanted to channel the idea of the assassins to connect more of our grade through friendly assassins,” said Wang.

Sophia Tabibian Proposes Solutions

Continued from A1, Column 5

Tabibian proposed four novel approaches in her presentation designed to combat the growing flood crisis in Pakistan. For attendee Madelyn Esposito '27, of the four methods that Tabibian introduced, increasing educational capacity stood out the most to her.

Alexis Lee '28, who hadn't previously learned about the drastic effect of climate change in Pakistan, found Tabibian's presentation eye-opening and informative. Lee expressed her surprise at the fact that these issues were treated as everyday occurrences in Pakistan.

“I don't remember it ever being in the news at all... I also didn't know the government didn't do that much to help and that it happened so frequently. Even though it's happened so many times, no one has really changed the infrastructure or helped with the floods being managed, so that leads to it happening over and over again,” said Lee.

“Increasing education capacity, especially in a country like Pakistan where a lot of the society is built around agriculture and it's more rural, making sure that people can learn about these issues, and that they themselves can

become involved is really important as well. It was really important that she touched on that,” said Esposito.

Reflecting on Tabibian's proposed solutions for the flooding crisis, Esposito commended her thorough approach. Esposito described how Tabibian focused on local solutions that connected to those most directly affected by the floods.

“It was really important that her solutions focused on what Pakistan itself can do, because she did talk about how foreign aid helps but is more performative than anything and it doesn't actually make change. The change has to really start at the site of the issue. She took a very local approach to this issue. If you're looking at an issue very locally, you have to think about the solutions locally as well,” said Esposito.

Tabibian ended on an optimistic note, emphasizing Pakistan's youth population as a key driver for future climate action. She highlighted that educating the upcoming generations on sustainability could lead to improved resource allocation for flood mitigation and long-term resilience.

“Sixty-eight percent of Pakistan's population is under the age of 30, and that presents a huge opportunity for climate education, because if

game instead of just talking about it. They kept us all engaged. It was a more active ASM, [and] people were genuinely interested. It wasn't just someone talking for an hour and a half. There was audience participation too, as I got to go and play Roblox,” said Valckx.

Reflecting on the ASM, Alberto Agudo Diéguez noted the potential of the fireside chat to spark thoughtful dialogue on campus. Although the ASM seemed more like an interview than a conversation for him, Agudo Diéguez underscored the value of this model as a way to challenge different perspectives in pertinent topics.

“This fireside chat model is really nice and has a lot of potential if we actually spark conversations where the two people are sharing their different perspectives. It helps us if Dr. Kington is with another person, and as students, having two different perspectives on stage of two people that we look up to. It sparks our thoughts. I believe that if we actually engaged in this chat, if it were sharing different perspectives, which I've seen and it's super interesting, it would be really nice,” said Agudo Diéguez.

Spiritual Sampling: Tea as Meditation Celebrated for Andover's Tenth Anniversary United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Month



COURTESY OF SHLOAK SHAH

Students and faculty gathered for tea tasting in the Cochran Chapel Basement.

FELIX BRET & ADELYNE LIU

Closed eyes, gentle speaking, and the soothing sound of a tea kettle brewing set the scene on February 23 as Andover hosted its first “Spiritual Sampling: Tea as Meditation.” A part of Andover's celebration of the United Nations World Interfaith Harmony's Tenth anniversary, the event aimed to teach students how to meditate by sipping chamomile tisanes and inhaling the aroma of various teas while exploring the history and benefits of the practice.

Sponsored by the Chaplaincy and hosted by Mary Kantor, the Roman Catholic Chaplain, the meditation aimed to connect

tea with mindfulness and spirituality. Kantor discussed how the event aligned with the United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week and shared its purpose of fostering connection between various communities.

“It's a worldwide marking of religious and nonreligious communities which are looking towards serving the world in a better way and working together. The overriding model of the event is love of God, love of the good, and love of your neighbor, so it doesn't require being a believer, but it requires loving a sense of helping other people, and the United Nations has these different events throughout the year and this is the one that started on campus. I brought it to campus tenth years ago, and I wanted to do

a few more events this year to cover the month. The goal is that these events show a bit of good, love of neighbour and care for self in a cold winter,” said Kantor.

Alysson Irish, a certified tea sommelier and founder of a custom tea company named Teally, led the meditation. She shared her journey in becoming a certified tea sommelier, highlighting the impact tea history and culture had in her decision to pursue this certification.

“I have always been interested in tea but it was in the spring of 2022, shortly after I made a trip to London that I really became enamored of tea history and culture and decided that I wanted to learn more about it. Later on that spring, I had previously never heard of

a tea sommelier, that [it] was even something that you could do, but I found out that [it] was something you could get a certification for. That summer, I enrolled in an online class and got my certification,” said Irish.

As chamomile tea brewed throughout the session, participants took time to reflect on its calming effects, emphasizing tea's role in relaxation and mindfulness. Sophia Lazar '26 left the event with a deeper understanding of the history and meditative qualities of tea.

“My favorite part was hearing the history of different types of tea, in particular pu-erh tea and yellow tea. I wasn't as familiar with it. That was a really novel aspect of the event. I mainly came away from the event with the idea of how tea can be generally used as a form of meditation. People sort of overlook the calming aspect sometimes and just focus more on the flavor and the beverage instead,” said Lazar.

Chloe Kasule-Wallace '26 shared her insights into the manufacturing process behind tea from the event. As someone that enjoys tea herself, Kasule-Wallace expressed her new understanding of tea production and highlighted the various factors that impact the process.

“I did not know that things as small as the location where the tea leaves are grown, and how that really makes a difference in the tasting and the flavor, that's just something new that I'm happy I was able to learn about. My roommate and I are really into drinking tea and I recently got gifted a tea set with a lot of different types of tea and

I didn't really know anything about them. A couple of days after, this event came out, so it seemed like the perfect opportunity to learn more about them and just have a good time,” said Kasule-Wallace.

As the session continued, Irish discussed various health benefits associated with the six main types of tea. Shloak Shah '26 highlighted the event's focus on the benefits of various teas, especially those that were less familiar to attendees.

“The most interesting thing was learning about the specific benefits of certain teas, especially [those] I hadn't learned about before. One of my biggest takeaways is that tea can be useful [in] meditation, and that's one health benefit, but teas are also antioxidants and that's interesting,” said Shah.

Irish mentioned the role of tea in mindfulness, and explained how the practice can create an appreciation for the present. By noting the various steps in tea rituals, she emphasized the importance of engaging with tea both individually and in community with others.

“Using tea and the ritual of making tea and sharing, either sharing it with others or using it by yourself as a way to relax and to be more mindful and present. Tea is a wonderful way to help you do that. All of the aspects of selecting a tea and boiling the water and selecting a teacup, all those things can help us to be more mindful and increase our appreciation of the present,” said Irish.

10 Questions With Junko Pinkowski

REPORTING BY KRISTEN MA

Junko Pinkowski is an Instructor in Arts and an advisor for Asian Society, Japanese Society, and the Moviemakers’ club. Hailing from Tokyo, Japan, Pinkowski studied design at Whitecliffe College of Art and Design in Auckland, New Zealand. She returned to Japan for an apprenticeship in woodworking and traditional furniture design, then relocated to the US to pursue typography at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). She has exhibited her works in several galleries throughout the East Coast, including the metropolitan area of Washington D.C.

What is something that you cannot live without?

That’s a difficult question. I think my sight. I don’t think I can lose my sight. I can’t live without seeing, and I just love looking at things. I wouldn’t be able to draw inspiration from anywhere if I lost my sight. If I lose my eyes, that’s it. That’s the end.

In what ways does your passion for design and digital art manifest itself through teaching?

My passion for design, I’ve always loved it. Whether it’s with traditional drawing and painting, or any designs that involve compositions and colors or kind of combinations are things that I just love in general. That’s why in any field I teach, I do some traditional drawing, as well as experimental pieces. I do a design based on every project that I do, in the movie or advanced classes, or in multimedia where students can use all kinds of different media. But the design basics are always in every subject, so I get excited about that knowledge itself being used in different mediums.

What is one thing students have taught you here?

The ability to experiment. Just keep experimenting, that is the most important thing. Because of my design background, I’m constantly thinking about the end product. The end product has to be perfect; it has to be functional. But then working with the students definitely emphasizes the processes way more, which is sometimes more important than the product. And I’ve always had this product in focus, but working with the student is really like you’re focusing on the product process itself as well as the growth.

Could you elaborate on your choice to pursue education in a foreign country and what your experience at Whitecliffe College of Art and Design was like?

When I was in high school, I knew I wanted to pursue art, but I wasn’t quite sure which direction I wanted to go. I took a gap year off because of it. Then it was really when a friend of our family came in, who was living in New Zealand. They knew somebody from this art school, Whitecliffe College of Art and Design, and was teaching at Whitecliffe. They asked if I was interested in it and said that it was a beautiful country. Then I started looking into it, and I thought it was a really interesting country to go to because it’s completely on the other side of the hemisphere. [New



E. LIU/THE PHILLIPIAN

Zealand] was an amazing experience for me. It is a small country, but everywhere you go is different because they have that great kind of British culture as well as Native Maori and polynesian culture, that was totally a fascinating exposure for me. It also allowed me to study English and art at the same time.

What was your apprenticeship in woodworking and furniture design at the Matsumoto Technical Institute like?

It taught me traditional skills, woodworking, and a lot of different techniques. I was doing an apprenticeship with this man who is also a Miyadaiku, which is a temple carpenter. That’s different from a regular carpenter because they have incredibly traditional mastery skills. I happened to meet him in my hometown, and he was happy to take me in to teach me how to make furniture. He does furniture for the temples and shrines, so it’s different arts but it was there that I learned so much about the Japanese kind of tradition of mastery, like a master craftsman.

Working with them totally blew my mind. I love learning. I want to be a forever learner.

In what ways have the cultures you have experienced in different countries influenced the content of your art/artistic process?

It’s interesting, seeing how a different culture has influenced the craftsmanship as well as the design, compositions, and sense. The most significant thing I’ve come back to was my own origin. I’ve been exposed to so many things, so many artworks in Italy and other countries. I love learning new techniques, new culture, new patterns, new artwork. Studying that brought me back to appreciate my own culture, which I was neglecting. When you’re young, you don’t really think about [heritage] because you’re living in it so you don’t pay attention to it that much. But furniture design was one thing that really brought me back to traditional Japanese culture. The more you study, the more you’re exposed to a different culture. That definitely

influences me as well as my artwork, since I use different techniques and can model after different artists. Most importantly, it brought me back to where I started, the way I was, where I’ve been and who I am. That means [the] most.

Your collection, “A Pandemic Gestation,” was a means for you to compartmentalize your emotions and the tragedy you saw surrounding COVID-19. What does art mean to you? Is it something you turn to in times of unrest, or is it more than that?

[Art] is something I’ve always turned to. Artwork could be a reflection of myself during the time or the experiences that I’m having or seeing. Back then in Washington D.C., so much was going on while I was down there with the pandemic and the D.C. insurrections. I’m seeing it right there, live, and I have to pack it all in and at the same time, release it. Even being in that mall is such a stark contrast and so empty compared to what I was used to seeing. It was gloomy. It was depress-

ing. At the same time, the pandemic situation really limited me to go places or do things, and I started to see the nature and beauty so close to me that I hadn’t paid attention to before. I take the world in and hope that my work becomes a kind of expression of that time, whether it’s uneasiness as well as if that could lead to the healing of both myself and the viewer. Art becomes something that connects others in the healing process.

You’ve taught a wide range of courses at Andover, from Art 225 to 600 to Video. In what ways is teaching courses that are so varied both challenging and rewarding?

It is more rewarding. It is just great working with students and seeing their creativity as well as what it eventually becomes. In explorations and creativity, of course there is a kind of struggle along the way. It’s watching through the entire process that is really fun, and to see the end results is really rewarding. At the same time, I’m learning a lot from working with the students, constantly learning new skills, new ideas, and new ways to help as well.

What is something about you that most students and faculty members do not know?

I played the guitar in a punk band when I was in highschool, when I was in Tokyo. That was a good experience. It was not a famous band or anything, but I did play live in Tokyo. It was awesome stuff, but I unfortunately can’t play anything anymore.

What is the best piece of advice you have learned that you would like to relay to students?

Expose yourself to as many things as you can, whether you’re artists or athletes, just explore anything in particular. I can only speak for the art side of things, but everything is connected in some way. For example, it’s not just art history, it’s culture, it’s the food, it’s the movies. It’s even the sports. The more you know, the more you expose yourself to things you are unfamiliar with. You are enriching yourself, enriching your artwork. Try to take risks. Making mistakes is extremely important. When you’re young, if you make a mistake, you can easily be forgiven. Even if you make a mistake now, you’re forgiven easily. Whereas, if you’re an adult, it’s harder to be forgiven, so just make mistakes while you can and appreciate the surroundings that you have.

HERE AND THERE: THE WORLD RIGHT NOW

COLLECTED BY NICCOLO LEE-SUK & SELENE PARK

U.S. Politics: New York City Mayor Eric Adams’ Corruption Trial Put on Hold

The trial against NYC Mayor Eric Adams was vacated last Friday by U.S. District Judge Dale Ho. According to “AP News,” Adams has faced corruption allegations since last September, accused of accepting over 100,000 dollars in gifts from Turkish citizens in exchange for favors. The DOJ, represented by acting Deputy Attorney General Emil Bove, sought to drop all charges, arguing prosecution could interfere with Trump’s immigration measures in NYC. Several high-level prosecutors resigned in protest. “BBC” reported the DOJ’s move might suggest a quid pro quo between Adams and the Trump Administration, which both deny. Judge Ho rejected full dismissal but vacated the April 21 trial to gather more information, appointing attorney Paul Clements to argue against dismissal.

War/Peace: A Fragile Israel-Hamas Ceasefire

Set to expire on March 1, the first phase of the Israel-Hamas ceasefire is nearing its end. According to the “New York Times,” Israel had agreed to free 620 Palestinian hostages. In exchange, Hamas will free the last six surviving Israeli prisoners. However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has delayed the release of Palestinian hostages. Both parties have since accused the other of hindering the ceasefire. Although, after threats of military escalation from U.S. President Donald Trump and Netanyahu, Hamas returned the agreed-upon hostages, the remains of one hostage whom Hamas had returned — Shiri Bibas — turned out to belong to another unidentified Palestinian woman. Once again, this raised concerns about disrupting the ceasefire agreement, highlighting its tenuousness. As the second phase of the plan, Israel and Hamas are working toward a consensus on withdrawing weaponry and

armed forces from Gaza with the hope for eventual disarmament. According to “BBC,” the third phase of the plan includes a reconstruction proposal for Gaza.

Crime: Hospital Shooting in Pennsylvania Kills One and Injures Five

A police officer was killed and five people were severely injured during a hospital shooting at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Memorial Hospital in York, Pennsylvania on February 22, according to the “New York Times.” As reported on “CNN,” injured faculty include an ICU doctor, a nurse, a custodian, and another employee, three of whom were wounded by gunshots. The gunman was identified as Diogenes Archangel Ortiz, 49. According to York County District Attorney Tim Barker, Ortiz had headed straight to the ICU, where he held an ICU employee at gunpoint. Ortiz then came out to the hallway, where he was shot and killed by officers. According to “CNN,” the police officer who

was killed in the altercation was Andrew Duarte, age 30.

Economy: Germany’s Weakening Economy Influences Voters

Germany’s economy, the world’s third-largest, is in trouble. CNN reported that Germany’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) shrank in both 2023 and 2024, and is predicted to grow by a mere 0.3 percent this year. Germany’s wealth is mostly based on exports, which account for 43 percent of the country’s GDP. Due to rising energy costs, however, Germany’s once-enviable factories have been reduced to average in terms of efficiency. Research by the New York Times suggests that a less competitive workforce is another contributing factor. Additionally, President Trump intends to establish tariffs on goods imported to the US, Germany’s largest market, potentially weakening Germany’s economy even further. German citizens voted Sunday in the Bundestag (Parliament)

elections on Sunday with economic reforms at the forefront of their minds. The conservative Christian Democratic Union party, led by Friedrich Merz, won the election with 29 percent of the vote, followed by the right-wing Alternative party with 21 percent.

Accidents: Delta Flight Crash-Lands in Toronto

Delta Connection Flight 4819 from Minneapolis flipped over and crashed at Toronto Pearson International Airport on February 17 at around 2:15 p.m. According to “ABC News,” “the aircraft caught fire and slid across the airfield at roughly 100 miles per hour, losing a wing. All 80 people on board fortunately survived the crash. The crash is still under investigation, though aviation experts suspect that the jet’s landing gear prevented any deaths, according to “CBS.” This crash is the latest in a string of flight accidents in recent weeks, prompting concerns about flight safety.

Insights into Andover’s Stack Experience



COURTESY OF ELLA KOWAL

Migyu Kim ’25, Avery Davis ’25, Lauren Montgomery ’25, Marcela Hernandez ’25, Jac Gordon ’25, and Ella Kowal ’25 have lived in Samaritan House this school year, representing Abbot Cluster.

Jay Wei ’27 living in Pemberton Cottage next year.

“We decided to apply for that stack because we happen to be a group of eight or nine, and Pemberton [Cottage] was the best fit for our stack. Our two options were Pemberton and Draper. Draper happens to be quite far from the middle of campus, and Pemberton is right across from Samuel Phillips Hall, right next to Falls [Music Center]. In terms of living in the stack, it gets kind of repetitive, and you have this monotonous routine of seeing the same person every day. The bonds are going to be so strong. You really forge these strong relationships with the eight or nine people that you choose to live with. In a big dorm, you have friends in the dorm but you don’t know everyone super well.”

Chris Fu ’26 living in Andover Cottage this year and next year.

“There were a couple people I didn’t really know too well at first, but over the past six months or so, I have gotten to know them pretty well. I would say we are all pretty good friends... [Some advice I have] is just be open-minded, try to be flexible. Ultimately, you all are living together and in really close quarters, so you just want to keep an open mind to what other people may prefer. But make sure to let your voice be heard as well. Stand up for yourself and share your thoughts, because ultimately the people you are stacking with should be people who care about you.”

Ruby Kokinos ’26 living in Whitney House this year and next year.

“I love the homey feel of the stack as opposed to a big dorm where you might not know everyone. There’s a lot more compromise and fun things you can do with the space because it’s shared amongst people who all chose to be together. For example, we use the common room to play games at night and have movie nights, which is something we might not be able to do in a bigger dorm. It allows people to build the community they want around themselves, which I think makes people more eager to participate in the larger community as well, within the cluster and the school.”

Alex Giarnese ’25 living in Pemberton Cottage this year.

“Stacks simply are just a lot more organized and cleaner and a little bit quieter than bigger dorms, which is really nice, especially for Senior year when you’re really busy doing a lot of work and you sometimes just need a place to go back to that’s calm and peaceful. One thing I really love that our dorm does is our family dinners. Our house counselor cooks the nine of us a dinner on Sunday [once a month] and we all sit and talk about our weeks, our months, [and] we talk about things going on on campus and we have really good food, and it’s just a really nice tradition that [Eric] Denby has set up for us, which has just been so much fun.”

Andrew Cai ’27 living in Draper Cottage next year.

“My stackmates are friends that I’m very close to and are responsible people who I believe hold similar living values as me. I believe that as a group, we shouldn’t encounter many issues that I’ve faced in larger dorms. The biggest challenge of joining a stack would be finding a reliable and cohesive group of people to stack with, and I’d say that with our group we are fortunate to have connections amongst each other and a strong sense of mutual trust. For people applying to stacks next year, I’d say to focus especially on who you’d like to stack with, and to give it a shot, because there’s no harm in trying. Good luck to all who would hope to apply!”



COURTESY OF VALENCIA ZHANG

Ten Senior girls live in Smith House in Flagstaff this school year.

Pharewell Phebruary

Day in the Life of a Student Who STILL Hasn't Submitted Their Mid-Year Reflection

8:00 a.m: I wake up to several missed calls and snaps from my Dean begging me to come over later tonight. He says he wants to get to know me better and wants my reflection. I get the ick and I leave him on opened. He gives me a GAP.

8:30 a.m: After my point person snitches on me, I am immediately apprehended by PAPS and taken to Rabbit Pond, where I'm forced to call the head of admissions at *insert dream Ivy League School* and confess "I lack executive functioning and work ethic, as I was unable to submit my Mid year reflection on time." I am further tasked with planting empty bottles around the pond for the Dean's annual easter egg hunt.

9:00 a.m: I run into a student from Andover High and he pushes me into the pond, face first.

9:05 a.m: I call PAPS to pick me up, but I'm put on hold.

12:00 p.m: I hang up, dragging myself to the edge of the pond where I see a PAPS officer doing the butterfly stroke.

1:23 p.m: After some serious reflection and deep breaths, I drag my soggy self up through the cemetery. I suddenly slip and fall right on to the grave of Harriet Beecher Stowe. Students passing by call me a bigot and throw snow at me. I am sopping wet at this point.

2:00 p.m: After collecting myself, I return to my dorm and log onto Outlook to get my meeting link. I am brutally confronted by Microsoft verification.

2:16 p.m: After I finally sign and access the link to my GAP meeting held on Roblox and am horrified to see the avatars of the Cell Phone Task Force and Dr. Kington. It was at this moment I knew, this train ain't got no more track.

2:20 p.m: As the meeting drones on, I debate calling an Uber to help me escape from campus, but I remember to submit a leave request on REACH.

4:00 p.m: Leave request approved! I call my uber and get in.

4:01 p.m: My tummy's turnin and I'm feelin' kinda homesick. Then my Uber driver turned on the radio and the Case-oh song was on, and the Case-oh song was on, so I put my hands up!

4:02 p.m: My driver starts cussing me out. We crash into the Pine Knoll cat boner statue. As I try to wave down help on main street, the AHS kids spray me as I have yet to dry off.

4:25 p.m: While I'm laying in the hospital bed, my Dean walks in to inform me I know I risk facing a GAP for my actions in the UBER, "Dancing without room for the blue book" he tells me.

5:00 p.m: Made it back in time for dinner! Today, it was pancakes, waffles, and sausage! Yum!

6:00 p.m: I search for a quiet place to start my Mid-Year Reflection and end up in the baseball dugouts. Whoopsies! It looks like two other people are already here!

Week's Top Headlines

- *Susie's Introduces New "Gold Cards" Good for Cutting Lines and Guaranteeing a Four-Year Stay in Your Dorm of Choice*
- *Freshman in Multivariable Drops Out for Leading Job at Lockheed Martin*
- *Diana Taurasi's Retirement Shocks the League; Many Now Unable to Name Three Active WNBA players*
- *Library Opens New Study Space Out of Unused Offices called "Partially Silent": A Haven for Students Who Want to Avoid Having to Fully Converse With Friends but Are Still Down to Occasionally Whisper Loudly*
- *Drake Reportedly Very Interested in Andover After Finding Out there are No "Madres and Padres" Around*
- *Attendance Rate Drastically Falls on the 26, Students Frightened of "Getting Slimed Out"*



K. MA /THE PHILLIPIAN

OVERHEARD ON THE PATHS

- "Dr Kington playing roblox was a tease."
- "I intentionally stir the pot so I can end up on OOTP."
- *muffled crying* - student who's music indie 2020 music played out loud in silent.
- "Police are saying the sanctuary just swallowed them whole or somethin'."
- "Which do you think will make me infertile first, the nut jabs or the cut" - Anonymous Wrestler
- "We are thinking of performing "They Not Like Us" at pep rally" - BVH player

Exeter Spirit Week

- Monday: Celebrate the 108th anniversary of the February Revolution! Dress as your favorite Marxist revolutionary or edgy, privileged, Western teenager.
- Tuesday: Career Day! Manifest your future of being a soulless sellout by participating in Goldman Sachs Day. Dress up like your role models Gordon Gekko, Patrick Bateman, and Jordan Belfort. American Psycho and the Wolf of Wall Street will also be shown for those who venerate.
- Wednesday: Emulate alumnus Mark Zuckerberg by prostrating yourself to the Trump administration. Do not hold back — get your spinelessness on full display!
- Thursday: In honor of Principal Rawson who's stepping down, dress as other famous quitters: Richard Nixon, Justin Trudeau, and Benedict Arnold.
- Friday: Raw Dog for Big Red, bring your anger to Pep Rally! Campus party afterwards. (Stay away from some of the teachers though)
- In case some of the overtly friendly A/E Cheers haven't been hitting for you, here are some uncensored, impeccable cheers for you and your friends to whip out this winter:
- "I said you travel, you walk too much!" (Thank you SLAM)
- "March 10! March 10! March 10!"
- "I hear Kendrick is doing a second 'Not Like Us' for Exeter faculty members."
- "Exeter's T.U.B. was just a white sink."



The Phillipian SPORTS

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i see the light.

February 28, 2025

Boys Hockey Beats Brooks, Pingree, and NMH, to Carry a Three Game Win Streak Into Upcoming Game Against Exeter

ALEX GODSEY &
THIAGO JOLLON

FRIDAY 2/21	
Andover	3
Brooks	1
SATURDAY 2/22	
Andover	3
Pingree	2
WEDNESDAY 2/26	
Andover	5
NMH	1

Boys Hockey (16-9-3) has bounced back from last Wednesday's tough overtime loss with three straight wins. The streak began with a 3-1 victory over Brooks on Senior Night, followed by a hard-fought 3-2 overtime win against Pingree. A dominant 5-1 road win against Northfield Mount Hermon (NMH) added to the team's momentum, which they aim to carry into Saturday's matchup at Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter).

Tyler Mioceovich '26 reflected on the team's mindset heading into the Brooks game after the loss against Cushing last Wednesday. He emphasized that preparation had been key to beating Brooks in regulation and Pingree in overtime.

"We were reeling from our



M.STOUT/THE PHILLIPIAN

Rui Han '25 squares up against Brooks in the first quarter.

loss on Wednesday, which was a tough overtime loss. We [came] into the games knowing that they were must win games, and we had to come out of the weekend with those under our belt. The preparation towards the games reflected that. Leading into the games, we were super prepared and focused for the task of getting two wins," said Mioceovich. "They were both within a couple goals throughout the whole game so it was a lot of back-and-forth play, not getting too high when we would score, [and] not getting too low when they would score."

The game against NMH on Wednesday was much more one-sided, as Boys Hockey

rolled to a 5-1 victory. Danny Collins PG '25 played a key role with a two-point night. Kieran McIntosh '27 also praised co-captain Peyton Militello '25, who just recovered from Norovirus, and broke down four of the goals in the high-scoring game.

"First goal, nice shot from the point by number nine, Chas Sabre [25], Danny Collins, in the dirty area, tipped it in, took it home, first goal. Second goal, of course, Danny Collins again, pass to Alex Small [26]. [He] dekes the goalie, goes around, shoots off the back of the goalie, in the net. Bing, bang, boom, that's two. Third goal, a beauty scored in front of the net.

Nathan Kreppner [27] to Alex Theodore [27]. Alex Theodore does as he does. Greasy tucks in front of the net. And fifth goal, Grayden Robertson Palmer [25]. Empty net merchant just tucked an empty netter," said McIntosh.

Edouard Lord '26, who tended the net against Pingree and NMH, highlighted the team's improved ability to close out games. Despite struggling to hold leads at times this season, the team managed to secure two tight victories against Brooks and Pingree.

"One of our strengths was just being able to close out some close games. We've dropped a few this season,

in the late moments of games that we feel like we should have won. It was nice to come out on top in two very close games and be able to finish the job at the end. So that was a strong point of our team," said Lord.

Throughout the game, the team's physicality and penalty kill were key factors in their dominant win over NMH. Andover's relentless pressure and strong defensive play helped put the game out of reach by the second period.

"At the start of the game, we kind of started off slow, and we were letting them bounce us around. They're a pretty big team. But during the second period, we got our feet underneath us and started to lay some big hits. Shout out to Zachary Skowronek [25]... He's an animal. That really got us going," said Kreppner.

McIntosh expressed his excitement for the upcoming Exeter game, hyping up the matchup and emphasizing the team's momentum as a potential edge over their rivals. With confidence and energy, he made it clear that the team is ready for the challenge.

"Don't even get me started. This one's gonna be a tilt. One for the ages. You all should be there. Who's Exeter? Who's Exeter? No, but realistically, we're gonna carry this momentum from our past three games. We're on a good streak right now, we've been scoring some goals, [and] having some fun. We're gonna have two good practices, and then we're gonna go and give them hell," said McIntosh.

Boys Hockey will face off Exeter away this Saturday.

Girls Squash Secures Seventh Place at Nationals

EMILY NEY

This weekend, Girls Squash (10-1) traveled to Philadelphia for the U.S. High School Squash Championship (Nationals), competing in a high-stakes and invigorating environment among 89 of the nation's top-performing teams. Ultimately, the team placed seventh in Division One.

Explaining the unique experience of playing an individual sport as a team, Rachel Levitsky '28 commended Isabella Tang '28, who recently triumphed in the U.S. Junior Squash Championships. Coming down to the wire, Tang secured the team's seventh place result by defeating Kent in the second consolation round.

"Every player was very important. Each position, whether you're number one or number seven, [is] equally important and equally contributes to the team's score. The deciding match was

when we played Kent in the last match of the [consolation round]. It was our number one player, Isabella Tang, who decided our 4-3 win. That was really crucial. Our whole team was really, really excited after the win," said Levitsky.

Prisha Shivani '26 added onto the atmosphere leading up to Tang's decisive win, emphasizing team spirit and suspense.

"[Our team] was all outside her court, cheering and supporting her, and she ended up winning in three games. It's been really fun to watch her play. She's a new person in our team and the way she plays is so admirable and entertaining," said Shivani.

Despite the demanding event, Shivani emphasized the team's unrelenting passion and support for each other during matches.

"Even if you weren't reffing the player on court, a lot of [our teammates] would still go up and help them in between games," said Shivani. "There were two matches



COURTESY OF MIGYU KIM

Girls Squash huddles before taking on Kent in the second consolation round.

where we were playing higher seeded teams and we went in as the underdog. Although we didn't end up winning those games, we put our best game in and everyone tried and gave their 100 percent."

Though the team had a week and a half without games prior to Nationals, Minnie Kim '27 credited the team's success at Nationals to its consistent practice throughout the season.

"Throughout the season, we've been focused on fine-tuning our score skills, especially our fitness and speed. We can see our hard work paying off [at] Nationals when we beat players [or teams] that we usually

didn't beat," said Kim. "High school nationals is a really fun, intense environment. It's a bunch of high schools all packed into one large building, all screaming and cheering for each other."

With its final tournament around the corner, Kim highlighted the team's diligent preparation. Specifically, Kim noted, the team will focus on unwinding from the intensity of nationals and projecting their strength onto its final matches.

"We have one tournament left. This is our final push, and we really have to take advantage of it. We're going to use this week to rest and get ourselves... back together

after the really intense tournament last weekend. Going in, we're just going to have a mindset [of] going in for one last push," said Kim.

Girls Squash will compete at the New England Interscholastic Squash Association Championships this weekend.

Note: Prisha Shivani is a News Editor for The Phillipian.



COURTESY OF MIGYU KIM

Girls Squash gathers between games.

Chris Kreider ‘10 and Team USA Hockey at Four Nations Face-Off

VIVIEN VALCKX

From February 12 to 20, the National Hockey League (NHL) and the National Hockey League Players Association (NHLPA) staged the Four Nations Face-Off. The tournament featured leading NHL players from four teams: The United States, Canada, Finland, and Sweden. The tournament was round-robin style, where all teams faced each other at least once and gained points depending on their results. The two highest-scoring teams advanced to a final where Canada defeated the U.S. in a 3-2 overtime victory.

Among the U.S.’ roster was Andover alum Chris Kreider ’10. Kreider played with Andover Boys Hockey before pursuing the sport at Boston College’s Division I program. Currently, he plays for the New York Rangers, where he will remain until February 2027. Kreider’s NHL career has been marked by success. In the 2024 Stanley Cup play-

offs, he became the Rangers’ all-time leader in play-off goals, playoff power-play goals, and playoff game-winning goals.

Boys Hockey Head Coach Paul Tortorella ’80 mentored Kreider on the ice and instructed him in the classroom.

“He was always a sincere and engaged student. I know he mentioned one of the books we read, Italo Calvino’s The Baron in the Trees, in a New York Post article on him. He said that the book really activated his imagination. Imagination is one of the most important parts of sports. You have to be able to imagine the field or ice and think ahead as to what will or can happen before it happens. I loved that he remembered that book and identified with it and brought it into his identity and life,” said Tortorella.

NHL 4 NATIONS FACE-OFF		Scoring Guide
Regulation Win	➡	3 pts
Overtime/Shootout Win	➡	2 pts
Overtime/Shootout Loss	➡	1 pt
Regulation Loss	➡	0 pts
Regulation: the standard 60 minutes of gameplay	Overtime: extra period after regulation	Shootout: if nobody scores, the teams play best-of-3 penalty shots

CLAIRE WANG/THE PHILLIPIAN

Clusterball: More than a L.I.F.E. Sport

AARON HUANG

Clusterball is a winter-term recreational sport for Uppers and Seniors. Around 70 to 75 students, across eight teams, participate in competitive basketball games in the Snyder Center. This week, athletes competed in Clusterball playoffs and finals. Ultimately, the Green Team, captained by John Bancone ’25 and Denzil Pierre ’25, emerged victorious in a 17-16 overtime win.

Thomas Fritz, a Instructor in History, works alongside Maria Martinez, Troy Turick, and Cesar Dominique-Santos to keep track of game scores and break up fouls and altercations. Fritz expressed his appreciation for Clusterball because of his joy for both basketball and interacting with students.

“Because we’re with the

older students and there’s the need for an adult present on each of the four courts, we time the quarters, keep score, and step in if there’s any controversy that can’t be settled. That’s been minimal all season. Then, just try to get to know more students than you already know in a different context. Have fun with them, cheer them on. Be encouraging when students make good plays or fun shots. I know basketball, I played basketball in high school, I’ve coached. It’s an opportunity to do something,” said Fritz.

Fritz explained that eight teams of eight to ten players are formed, then games with eight four-minute periods take place every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

“We spend two weeks before January just letting the teams play and trying to sort out as best we can a balanced

league of eight teams while still keeping in mind some friends wanting to be together. Then a round-robin season determines seeding for us. It was 1-8, we went into the playoff round of one through eight, and now the winners will play today in the semi-finals and tomorrow for the finals. It’s all for exercise and fun but there’s structure to it, at least in terms of teams, keeping score, and having a schedule,” said Fritz.

Michael Williamson ’25 has participated in Clusterball since Upper year and enjoys the sport’s competitive yet low-stakes and enjoyable nature.

“Last year I did Clusterball. I had a lot of fun. There’s a lot of energy around it. It wasn’t exactly what I expected. It was solely upperclassmen, which I think made it feel a little bit more exclusive and brought a lot more energy

towards the sport. When it came to the playoffs, everyone was taking it very seriously. We had warmups every time before practice. Overall, the competitive environment with very low stakes is something that is extremely fun. I enjoy the irony and how competitive the sport is. It’s a rec sport, so there are no real stakes, like I said earlier. Yet, at the same time, you have injuries, people taking the sport extremely seriously, lots of trash talking. Also, you have a team that is built throughout the entirety of the term, and you grow really close together,” said Williamson.

On Monday, the fourth-seeded Orange Team battled the first-seeded Red Team in the Clusterball semi-finals. Ultimately, the Red Team won in a narrow 32-31 overtime victory. Orange Team player Cameron Marnoto ’25 commented on

the Orange Team’s unfortunate loss and praised his teammate Luke Gallo ’25 for skill on the court.

“It was a tough loss. We had a good fight, but it came down to overtime and the Red Team got the first point. There was a bit of an unfortunate call at the very end of the regular period with a toe on the line from Luke’s three. Unfortunately, the coaches thought it was a one, which only tied the game. I thought it could have been called our way, it wasn’t, and we had a tough loss because of that. Luke had a great game, as he was hitting many heavily contested deep three point shots and it was quite impressive. We deserved it, it was a tough way to go, but ultimately it was a good game where we tried our best and I had a great time in my two years in rec ball,” Marnoto.

Boys and Girls Indoor Track Post Strong Results at USATF-NE Championships

XAVIER HOWELL & ETHAN LY

A small cohort of athletes on Boys and Girls Indoor Track & Field traveled to Harvard University for the USATF New England (USATF-NE) Championships on February 16. The meet hosted New England’s top-performing competitors in a competition to end the season. It featured contestants across a variety of ages and several preparatory schools, including Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) and Governor’s.

According to Gracie Aziabor ’26, who threw 34 feet 4 inches for second place in the Shot Put, the atmosphere inside the Gordon Indoor Track Facility was full of energy and supportiveness.

“The atmosphere was definitely very energetic. It’s one of the biggest meets that we go to every year. There were hundreds of people, a bunch of different teams, and all different ages. It was really busy and there was always something going on. I just thought it was super fun. Andover did a great job cheering each other on and supporting each other even though we had a lot smaller team numbers. It was just really great. Everyone at the meet was



COURTESY OF SARAH BAE

Caitlin Ly ’27 and Ela Budzinski ’28 warm up on the blocks.

super nice and supportive. We got to see a lot of records get broken,” said Aziabor.

Aziabor praised her teammate Ethan Brown ’27 in his stellar 200-Meter performance and high energy. Brown finished his race in 22.95 seconds, placing sixth among 73 competitors.

“A stand-out was Ethan Brown. He’s new to the team

this year, new to Andover. He just did a really great job, running with a lot of confidence and putting himself out there. At this meet, it can be super intimidating to run against people who are a lot older than you because the meet is open to all ages. He also was just a good teammate who had a lot of great energy,” said Aziabor.

Michelle Onyeka ’27 praised

Ela Budzinski ’28 for her impressive 400-Meter race, in which she ran 59.94 and qualified for New Balance Nationals Indoor in the freshmen division.

“[Budzinski is] a freshman and throughout this season, she barely had any chances to run a 400[-Meter]. The first time she did, she didn’t run as [well] as she wanted to. She wanted to qualify for freshman nationals. [During the race,] everyone was cheering for her at the end of her 400. I could really see her determination; she broke 60 seconds which was insane and qualified for Nationals for freshmen,” said Onyeka.

According to Onyeka, the USATF-NE Championships, in its competitive nature, benefited athletes who had not yet qualified for Nationals. At the meet, New Balance Nationals Indoor qualifiers in the Women’s 800-Meters included: Amelia Alvazzi ’26, who placed second in 2:15.61, and Anya Budzinski ’26, who finished in 2:18.93.

“The meet was good for some people more than others: this meet was their chance to qualify for Nationals. It was pretty big for them... and there were also really big wins. Lots of people qualified for Nationals,” said Onyeka.

Towards the end of the meet, a Harvard athlete jumped 7 feet 3 3/4 inches in the High Jump,

breaking the university’s school record. Aziabor commented on the impressiveness of the feat and the inspiration it provided the team.

“Right before the team was about to leave, we got to see a Harvard student set a new school record in the high jump. It was really cool to watch because it was a bonding moment for the team. We all got to watch him and cheer him on together, but it’s also cool to see people performing at such a high-level. It’s something to motivate the team even though our season is over. A lot of people are going to be continuing into outdoor season and so I think it was nice to see someone perform so well and use it as inspiration for later progress,” said Aziabor.

On Sunday, several athletes will travel to Boston University for the Last Chance Indoor National Qualifier meet. From March 13-16, five athletes will compete at the storied New Balance Nationals Indoor: Co-Captain Emma Hagstrom ’25, Caitlin Ly, Anya Budzinski, Ela Budzinski, and Amelia Alvazzi.

Editor’s Note: Gracie Aziabor is a Layout Editor for The Phillipian.

WRITE FOR SPORTS!!!

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A

E

Phillips Exeter Academy will host Andover this Saturday for the annual Winter Andover/Exeter (A/E) rivalry. Held during the final weekend of the term, A/E is the culminating moment for teams' seasons, with all their hard work and effort finally paying off in the second-oldest high school rivalry in the United States. Andover hopes to replicate their dominant performance from last year's winter term victory. In addition to the five varsity teams competing, four JV teams will play on the day.


BOYS HOCKEY

Boys Hockey (15-3-9) started the season strong, losing just one game in their first ten and winning the Flood Marr tournament for the first time in school history with an electrifying performance against Noble and Greenough in the finals. They enter A/E weekend on a hot streak with four wins in their last five games as they hope to avenge their overtime loss to Exeter earlier in the season. Boys Hockey plays away at Exeter on Saturday at 4:15 p.m.




BOYS BASKETBALL

Entering A/E weekend, Boys Basketball (12-10) emerges from a 6-win, 1-loss streak. Among their recent victories, the team secured a 94-50 victory against Bradford Christian Academy, outscoring it by 44 points. Last season against Exeter, Boys Basketball defeated its rival 64-58; both schools rematched in the NEPSAC Class A Finals. Exeter, however, triumphed over Andover in a 60-42 victory. As a result, the team will battle Exeter on Saturday at 3:30 PM.




GIRLS HOCKEY

Girls Hockey (16-3-3) are coming off an impressive season, outscoring their opponents 92-29 as they strive for a NEPSAC Championship. Notable wins included an 11-0 win against Kimball Union Academy and an 8-0 win against Brooks. Maggie Averill '27, Caroline Averill '26, and Molly Boyle '25 are players to watch during the game, with all three representing Team USA at the U-18 Women's World Championships. Girls Hockey will face Exeter at 2:00 p.m.




GIRLS BASKETBALL

This season, Girls Basketball (11-13) has seen various highlights. Notably, in its season opener, the team defeated Pomfret in a dominant 59-29 victory; in late January, it secured a 55-15 win against St. Paul's. Last season, the team saw two victories against Exeter: at the Eight School Tournament in 57-38 and during A/E weekend in 52-44. Girls Basketball seeks further success against its rival on Saturday at 1:30 p.m.



ALL-GENDER WRESTLING

All-Gender Wrestling (9-7) have their first A/E weekend dual meet against Exeter in history. Despite a rough 1-4 start to the season, Wrestling has rebounded, ending their season with an 8-2 and culminating in an impressive performance at the National Prep Tournament with two winners and two third-place finishers. Julian Rios '26, 113-pound weight class, and Dani Nugent '25, 138-pound weight class, are wrestlers to watch as they hope to cap off their dominant seasons with a win. All-Gender Wrestling will face Exeter at 3:00 p.m.



AGLAIA HONG/THE PHILLIPIAN

Boys Squash: Better than Fifteenth in the Nation and Better than Exeter

MATHEW LIU &
HAOYU ZHANG

WEDNESDAY 2/26	
Andover	6
Exeter	1

This past week, Boys Squash faced two of its toughest challenges: the High School National Championships (Nationals) in Philadelphia and a rivalry match against Exeter. Despite a challenging draw at Nationals, the team fought hard to place 13th overall before returning home to dominate Exeter 6-1.

Entering Nationals as the 11th seed, Andover opened against a highly ranked Deerfield team in a grueling 5-2 loss, pushing the team into the 9th-16th place bracket. Later that night, the team faced another brutal loss, finishing close to midnight, before winning their remaining games.

“Well, this weekend we took a seven-hour trip to Philadelphia and played some of the best teams in the nation. We faced a strong Deerfield squad and, despite tough matches, lost 5-2. After spending all day in the squash



Pragun Seth '25 wins against his Exeter opponent.

center, we played another late-night match and, due to sheer exhaustion, lost again. But after that, we won the rest of our matches and finished 13th overall,” said Corey Shen ’26.

Although the team finished below its original seeding, spirits remained high, thanks to parents and teammates who ensured everyone felt supported throughout the tournament despite being so far from home.

“I didn’t feel like we were out of place. I was really happy that many of our players’ parents came and provided us with snacks, water, and energy drinks. Even though we were away from home, it felt like we were cared for. We also matched the energy of teams with bigger crowds, cheering for each other every step of the way,” said Shen.

Despite the absence of co-captain Avery Lin ’25 due to injury, the team stayed

mentally sharp, using Lin’s injury as motivation to push forward. Shen praised Co-Captain Will Weissman ’25, who ended his Nationals losing streak with a five-set win against Deerfield.

“Our other captain, Avery Lin, suffered a bad injury, which made the team nervous, especially for Will. He’s a great player, and losing him impacted our ability to compete, but we fought for him on the court and kept him in our thoughts. He (Weissman) stepped up, played a really close match, and flipped the script on his five-set losses. His opponent was being a jerk on and off the court, so we were all thrilled when Will pulled through,” said Shen.

Aaron Bai ’27 praised Alex Yang ’26, who secured a key victory against Choate by returning from an 8-3 deficit in three separate games, showing incredible resilience under pressure.

“Alex Yang helped us secure our win against Choate in a very tight game. He came back in three separate games from being down 8-3 to eventually win all three, so that was pretty good to see,” said Bai.

After Nationals, Andover refocused on its rivalry match against Exeter, delivering a dominant 6-1 win. It was an emotional and passion-driven match, as Franklin Kozol ’27, in his first A/E appearance, selflessly gave up his No. 7 spot to let a senior team-

mate compete in his final AE match.

“On a team and in life, you can’t always put yourself first. In squash, you’re playing alone but also representing your team. I gave up my seventh spot, so a senior could play his last match, and that’s just part of what makes a strong team. There was definitely a lot of cheering, especially for the seniors. If it had been at home, I think more people would have come to watch, but the energy was still there,” said Kozol.

With Nationals and the Exeter match behind them, Andover now focuses on the New England Championships in Newport. The team faces a demanding schedule, balancing matches, schoolwork, and finals preparation, but remains determined to finish the season strong.

“After four matches in three days, plus Exeter, it’s been a lot, especially with finals coming up. When we’re not playing squash, eating, or sleeping, we’ll be working. I love Newport; it’s one of my favorite places ever. Winning that challenge match gave me the extra push to make sure I got to go back,” said Kozol.

With Nationals behind them and a decisive victory over Exeter, Andover enters New England’s with confidence, aiming to close out the season on a high note.

Boys Basketball Comes Back to Win Crucial Game in Playoff Chase

AARON HUANG/
THIAGO JOLLON

SATURDAY 2/22	
Andover	60
Belmont Hill	59

Boys Basketball secured a dramatic come-back victory over Belmont Hill, where a loss would have put them out of playoff contention. The win sets up a matchup against Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) — a victory will grant the team a spot in the postseason while a loss will end its season. With the game against Exeter coming up, the team is now focused on extending their season with a performance that matches the resilience it displayed against Belmont Hill.

Jaylen Edmonds ’27 described the tense back-and-forth nature of the game as Andover trailed for nearly the entire contest. He mentioned that the team only led in the last two seconds, when Solomon Marshall ’25 sank the game-winning shot.

“We ended up winning. The exact score was 60-59, and it was a good game. We were down most of the game.

Actually, the only time we were up was the last two seconds of the game after Solomon hit that big shot. It was a lot of fighting back. We started the game down, we were down for a majority of it,” said Edmonds.

Edmonds recalled how, despite being six points with just 90 seconds remaining, the team’s focus on little details helped it recover and ultimately take the win. He also added that the victory gave the team a significant confidence boost heading into its matchup against Exeter.

“The win gave us a lot of confidence going into our next game. It was nice to know that our work paid off because we had been fighting

back the whole entire game being down by 11 points, to being down by six with a minute and 30 seconds left to go. It was doing the little things that helped us come back: rebounding, passing, moving, making the extra shot, talking on defense. It was a collective of all of us coming together at that one time and not folding under pressure and adversity,” said Edmonds.

With playoffs on the line, Edmonds shared that the team will continue to carry a must-win mindset toward the upcoming Exeter game. He also noted that the high stakes of this game serves as a strong motivator.

“To be honest, it doesn’t feel any different from any

other game because that’s how we’ve been looking at every game. Every one of these past two games, we have had to win if we even want the chance to play in the playoff. This is the same predicament as last year, where we have to win this game [to make the playoffs]. That just gives us an extra edge because we know how much this game means to us and its potential for the playoffs,” said Edmonds.

Boys Basketball will travel to Exeter on Saturday for Winter A/E.

Girls Hockey Secures Dominant Win Over Worcester, Falls Short in Last-Second Battle Against Loomis Chaffee

ASHLEY SUH

SATURDAY 2/22	
Andover	5
Worcester	0

WEDNESDAY 2/26	
Andover	1
Loomis	2

Girls Hockey (15-3-4) triumphed in a decisive shutout against Worcester Academy (Worcester) on Saturday, following a previously winless two-game stretch. On Wednesday, however, it narrowly lost against Loomis Chaffee (Loomis).

Alexandra Burkina ’28 described Girls Hockey’s shut-out versus Worcester as a collective effort. Burkina emphasized the contributions of every player.

“The result of the game against Worcester was really good. We had a strong 5-0 win, and it felt like everyone really contributed and came together as a team. It took us a little bit to get on the scoreboard, but we dominated most of the play in general and then the goals came along

with it,” said Burkina.

Kimberly Duplessis ’27 recalled the team’s consistency against Worcester, a team that had improved from past seasons.

“It was a good game to try new things and focus on keeping our level of competition consistent throughout the game. Worcester was definitely a fast team, definitely faster than they were last year. Last year they were not as strong, so we knew going into the game that this would be an opportunity to try out some new things before playoffs,” said Duplessis.

Burkina echoed Duplessis’ statements and noted that Girls Hockey maintained a high level of play throughout the game to match Worcester’s fast-paced style. She also praised Goaltender Lauren Kennedy ’28 for her performance.

“Our successes in this game were moving the puck quickly and just playing at a fast pace almost all the time. We obviously had some moments that were not as strong, but our goalie Lauren Kennedy made some really good saves in those times to limit Worcester’s opportunities,” said Burkina.

Playoffs are nearing, and while its loss against Loomis could affect Girls Hockey’s momentum, Duplessis disagrees. She described the team’s detail-oriented adjustments following its loss.

“There are times where we have one person who says ‘hey we need to fix this,’ or



Madeleine Greenfield '26 prepares for a face-off on the ice.

‘maybe we should change this,’ but other times we come together as a team and decide certain things that we need to work on. It just depends on the situation, sometimes it’s one person who thinks they need to change, or a group of people have to change, and sometimes it’s team-wide,” said Duplessis.

The team has one more regular season game against Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter), until it reaches the playoffs, where it is set to play Noble and Greenough (Nobles). Burkina expressed that a win

would stem from high energy and strong preparation.

“We have one last game against Exeter, but after that we will be focusing on playoffs. Our first game will probably be against Nobles, whom we tied last time. We will have to work hard and win all of the 50/50 battles. We’re gonna have to bring so much energy too,” says Burkina.

Similarly, Duplessis stressed how losses serve as learning opportunities. The team will now focus its attention toward climbing the rankings.

Duplessis said, “I think the season has been going well so far. We’ve had a couple of losses, but they were definitely all learning opportunities. We’ve also had some pretty huge wins and were now focused on moving up in the rankings and keep competing going into playoffs.”

Girls Hockey will play at two p.m. on March 1 at Exeter for Winter A/E.

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Girls Basketball Wins Big during the NE8 Tournament, Narrowly Loses to Holderness on Senior Night

ASHLEY SUH & EVA JACKSON

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Girls Basketball (11-13) pulled out two impressive wins this past weekend in the NE8 tournament against Deerfield and Lawrenceville despite playing two games in one day. The team suffered a tough loss on Senior Night this Wednesday against Holderness, however, are preparing to finish off the regular season strong this Saturday against Exeter.

Cuyler Sparks '27 noted the team's resilience during their back-to-back matches at the NE8 tournament. She added that despite the early wake up and long bus ride, they kept their form and played well.

"[Playing] two games in a day, back to back, was definitely challenging for us. But we worked on [our]... endurance in practice. It really paid off and led to us winning both games," said Sparks.



A.PIZZ/THE PHILLIPIAN

Ava Davey '25 looks to pass in the second period against Hotchkiss.

Julianna Stevenson '28 shouted out teammate Laney Cafua '27, who has made a big impact in their past two wins with her uplifting presence and lockdown defense.

"She constantly brings effort. No matter what, she dives for loose balls and grabs rebounds. She passes on her energy to everyone else on the court and always knows how to get us going. She received the tough task of face-guarding a player on the opposing team and did amazing as [Cafua] held her to a very few shot attempts," said Stevenson.

During their senior night game against Holderness, Sparks highlighted Senior Emerson Buckley '25's determination and energy.

"I'd say one of the seniors,

Emerson, had a lot of really good blocks and was offensively one of their best players. She played really well, and she always brings really great energy and leadership to the team," said Sparks.

For the Girls Basketball Seniors — Ava Davey '25, Emerson Buckley, Sophie Dandawa '25, and Akari Imai '25 — Sparks described the emotional last home game of the season.

"There were a lot of high emotions, but in a good way. Our Seniors were definitely sad that this was going to be their last home game, and it also translated into our playing and the effort on the court," said Sparks.

Throughout the season, the team has faced many challenging teams, but the players

feel they have taken something from each game, win or loss. Stevenson expressed her excitement for their upcoming match against Exeter.

"I'm super excited for this weekend in our rivalry to show out all of our hard work as a team. The environment will be a huge adjustment that we are ready for and we will use as fuel," said Stevenson.

Adding onto Stevenson's comment, Sparks gave insight into how the team is preparing for the Andover-Exeter matchup, focusing on adjusting and staying focused during the game despite the loud, energetic atmosphere.

"Our coach has talked a lot about how loud it's going to be, [so we are] working on our communication... Also,

being able to keep our composure and not get worked up because of the crowds and energy in the gym," said Sparks.

Although they did not win on Wednesday, the team is confident in its performance and potential, preparing for each game differently.

"We have been working a lot on facing a team that plays man on man defense or zone defense, staying prepared regardless of what they come out in. We've also been working on tight defense and specific skills depending on the scouting reports that we receive on the teams we are playing," said Chloe Abou-Ezzi '27.

As the regular season comes to a close, Stevenson reflected on the friendships and knowledge she has gained through basketball thanks to supportive coaches and teammates.

"This season has had its ups and downs with our wins and losses, but overall, I have taken a lot away from this season. I have not only created new relationships, but also learned more about basketball that I will always carry with me. The coaches have been amazing to our team this season and truly believe in us," said Stevenson.

MORE PHOTOS
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Boys Varsity Swimming Dominates Exeter for Another Year

HAOYU ZHANG

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Exeter	76

Last Saturday, Andover Boys Swimming & Diving faced historic rival Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) in the annual A/E dual meet. Having won this dual for several years, Andover was favored to win. In a tight competition, Andover dominated individual events, and Exeter dominated the relays. Although Exeter fought hard, Andover managed to pull through with a commanding

34-point victory, maintaining an undefeated dual meet record.

Brian Lee '25, a senior on the team, expressed his joy in winning the final dual meet of his swimming career. The victory was even more meaningful due to the longstanding rivalry.

"It made me feel very happy that we won; we never lost. I was glad that my final dual meet in high school and at Andover finished with a win, so I'm very happy with that," said Lee.

Exeter had a great 200-Yard Medley Relay to start the meet, but Andover quickly bounced back and dominated both the 200-Yard Individual Medley (IM) and the 50-Yard Freestyle, scoring the major points in an impressive performance. William Sueling '26 noted Cyrus Law '27's

leadership and surprise swim in the 200-Yard IM, setting a new best time.

"I was impressed with Cyrus's leadership. He put a lot of work into helping the team for the meet. I think we only won because of him... He did the math and made sure everybody was doing the right event. He also swam fast, like a 2:13 in the 200 IM, which was impressive," said Sueling.

Exeter did have a few exceptional performers, namely seniors Rudd Day '25, Ethan Guo '25, and Winston Wang '25, though Andover still took the lead in the break. Eric Nie '26 praised David Porto '26 for his performance in the 200 and 500-Yard Freestyle in the second half of the meet.

"Porto, for the first time, went under two minutes in the 200-Yard Freestyle, and he also dropped ten seconds

in the 500-Yard Freestyle, so he did really well," said Nie.

The rest of the meet favored Andover, even with the lack of warm-down available. Lee praised the team for its ability to resist exhaustion and lactic buildup.

"The lactate tolerance part of the meet was well executed because, before this meet, we did a lactate set, so it was a good simulation. It prepared us well. We were well prepared in that aspect since there was no warm-down, and we had built up lactic acid in our bodies, so we were able to effectively perform with the lactic acid," said Lee.

Sueling also commented on the challenges of the meet, specifically the lack of spirit and support on the sidelines.

"We would have been better at Andover because we would have had fans. Nobody

was cheering for us there. It was all red walls," said Sueling.

Nie added his own opinions on the A/E atmosphere. Fueled by the competitive rivalry between Andover and Exeter, Nie pushed himself to perform better.

"It was more exciting than usual. Again, it's A/E, so we were against Exeter. For me, at least, it motivated me to swim faster, and I did pretty well," said Nie.

Wrapping up the final dual meet, Andover Boys Swimming prepares for the New England Division I Swimming & Diving Championship at Hotchkiss on March 8.

Girls Swimming & Diving Remains Supportive and Energetic despite Loss to Exeter

VIVIEN VALCKX

Girls Swimming & Diving fell to Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) in their annual Andover/Exeter (A/E) meet last Saturday. Despite the loss, the team swam strong races, with both Varsity and Junior Varsity (JV) competing together in a supportive atmosphere. Athletes emphasized the team's growth and camaraderie, which has continued to progress throughout the season.

For this meet, Varsity and JV's combined effort created an energetic environment on the pool deck. Nishi Amin '28 reflected on how this helped boost morale.

"Considering the fact that we were all together was really nice because usually we have JV meets and then varsity meets — they're separate — but this time it was [both teams together]. So it was nice being with the whole team. Also, having both the Varsity and JV teams at the meet helped to bring up the

mood and encourage the swimmers," said Amin.

Competing at Exeter presented additional challenges, as swimmers had to adjust to an unfamiliar pool environment. Djenabou Bah '28 noted that warming up before races helped ease nerves and allowed her to focus on her performance.

"In the actual event, it was kind of nerve-racking. I wasn't used to the different dynamics of the pool, because every pool has different [diving blocks], diving boards, and everything like that. But after warming up, I got more comfortable with it, so I can focus on the swim," said Bah.

Similarly, Camden Schopler '27 spoke on how despite the fact Exeter's pool wasn't in the best condition, spirits remained high.

"It was fun. I didn't really like Exeter's pool. It kind of downgraded, they had hair on the floor. But, the spirit was there, everybody was up and cheering for one another. We all were cheering for the boys team. The boys team, I don't know if they were cheering for the girls, but the girls

were cheering for everybody," said Schopler.

The team has been focusing on fine-tuning technical skills, including relay exchanges and pacing strategies. Bah highlighted how the team has developed a better understanding of each other, which has contributed to more effective relay transitions.

"We have been swimming a bunch of sets [as practice]. We practice relay dives, which I wasn't even familiar with before I came here, which really helps. We also practice getting to know a connection with each other better. For example, for the [Individual Medley (IM)] relays, we would know, 'Oh, this [is this] person's specialty, so we should go for this line-up.' or 'This person needs to go for another stroke,'" said Bah.

According to Bah, in individual events, record holder Ariana Zhao '25 stood out with a first-place finish in the 200-Yard IM.

"Ariana, a Senior on our team, did 200-Yard IM. She's currently our record holder in our pool here, but she did

really well. She got first place in it. It was an amazing swim to watch," said Bah.

Bah emphasized how swimmers rely on each other for motivation during races and practices. She spoke on how the presence of a teammate in an adjacent lane can push her to go faster.

"While we're swimming, we also kind of depend on each other just to push ourselves to go faster. When I have someone swimming right next to me, I will [think] let me try to keep up with this person. It just helps to have people swimming with you just so you feel more motivated to do sets," said Bah.

The A/E meet also marked an emotional moment for the team's seniors, who participated in their final swims — a long-standing tradition celebrating their contributions to the program. For Bah, witnessing this tradition for the first time was bittersweet and inspiring.

"My favorite moment was probably when the seniors got up to do their final swim. It's a tradition for Andover seniors and Exeter seniors to

go up and say their accomplishments and what they've done for the past four years. It was really fun, and it was kind of heartwarming and sad to see that, to know that there are hard-working and selfless swimmers here," said Bah.

The team also valued the meet as an opportunity to connect with swimmers from other schools, strengthening the sense of community within the sport. Bah reflected on how these interactions contributed to the team's culture.

"It helped build our culture because we got to meet different people also in other grades, and we got to meet different schools. I also met other kids from different schools. I text them now. It's just meeting more people, it's fun," said Bah.

Girls Swimming & Diving will compete at New England Prep School Swimming & Diving (NEPSSDA) on March 8.

WINTER HIGHLIGHTS

LUCILLE HEYD/THE PHILLIPIAN

Bennett Rodgers '26 broke the Indoor Track & Field record for the pole vault during the team's dual meet at Exeter. Rodgers vaulted over a height of 14'1" feet, catapulting him to first place at the meet and the record books. He will continue pole vaulting throughout the spring and his Senior year, hoping to also break the Outdoor Track & Field school record.



Courtesy of Caitlin Ly

At Andover's annually - hosted New England Preparatory School Track Association (NEPSTA) All-Comers, **Caitlin Ly '27** ran 7.21 seconds in the Girls 55-Meter Dash. Her performance in the event set a new school record, breaking Victoria Kadirir '20's previous 7.25-second sprint, and tied the Snyder Center facility record. Ly also partook in the school-record-breaking Girls 4x200-Meter Relay Team. On March 15, Ly, among others, will represent Andover at New Balance Nationals Indoor in the 60-M Dash.



Courtesy of Andover Athletics

At the National Prep Championships, **Dani Nugent '25** and **Toni Elliott '27** were crowned champions of the 138-pound and 185-pound girls' divisions, respectively. Nugent, who placed second at last year's tournament and is the reigning Beast of the East Champion, had a dominant run to the finals, pinning her opponent in the semi-final in nine seconds and wrestling less than four minutes during the tournament. Elliott, who placed second at 165 pounds last year, won her bracket with two convincing wins, followed by a come-from-behind pin in the finals.

Marc Nelson '25 broke the Indoor Track school record for the high jump during the team's dual meet at Exeter last Wednesday, in which he left over 6' 4.25". Nelson began training for the event as an Upper; his record-breaking performance comes after only a year of prior experience.



Courtesy of Juliana Stevenson

During Girls Basketball's game against St. Paul's, **Julianna Stevenson '28** broke the record for the most three-pointers made in a game, breaking Cuyler Sparks '27's previous record from earlier this season. Despite being only one of two Juniors on the team, Stevenson drained seven three-pointers en route to the team's convincing victory against St. Paul's 55-15. Stevenson's future is bright with three more years on the team ahead of her as she hopes to continue her record-breaking form.

Pippin Kantakom '25 set two school records at the Easterns meet on February 16, including one New England record. He broke the records for both the 100-Y Breaststroke and the 200-Y Individual Medley. His 100-Y Breaststroke time surpassed the previous New England record by nearly a full second.

Crossword Corner

BY MAXWELL LANGHORST

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS

- 1 Player's first game
- 6 Dance, in a video game
- 7 Grandmothers, to their grandchildren
- 8 Loose opposite
- 9 DOGE dude

DOWN

- 1 Al ____ (pasta term)
- 2 Inbox filler
- 3 Drum type
- 4 Person from Salt Lake City
- 5 Common type of final

1	2	3	4	
5				6
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS

- 1 The P of PRNDL
- 5 Zones
- 7 Furious
- 8 Aggressive poker move
- 9 Topping for Ice Cream or Waffles

DOWN

- 1 What socks come in
- 2 "A vast ____" (an impressive range)
- 3 Show on TV for the second time
- 4 Panko-breaded chicken dish
- 6 Permeate

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
	9			

ACROSS

- 1 A biologist's favorite acid
- 6 Blue Key Head who is nasty at Assassin
- 7 Talons
- 8 Gymnopedies composer Erik
- 9 Landsord's income

DOWN

- 1 Pre-K Basics
- 2 Shiny space-age material
- 3 Outraged
- 4 Lose-Lose synonym
- 5 Early stage, medically

1	2	3	4	
5				6
7				
8				
	9			

ACROSS

- 1 Daybreak
- 5 Emotionally detached
- 7 Wash lightly
- 8 Smoothie/Juice Brand
- 9 Back talk

DOWN

- 1 "Dangnabbit!"
- 2 Name for a spy
- 3 Golden ticket guy
- 4 Schnozzes
- 6 FBI Agents, for short



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Arts & Leisure

The Phillipian Co.

Stomping in Style: What Winter Boots are Andover Students Wearing?

WENDI WEI



KAYA HURTEAU '27

“[My boots] are pretty and they have lots of pink fluff on them. They [also] have these little shoe laces that just tie around them. My boots are also waterproof, so they’re actually very convenient for the weather. With these I have to try to wear tighter pants or pants that aren’t flared at the bottom because otherwise my pants would get really nasty. I try to match colors [such as] wearing a pink shirt, that’ll [compliment] the pink boots. People have been joking with me about them [though], because they think they’re funny looking. It’s funny because I have this one pair of fluffy pink earmuffs that kind of match the boots so everyone’s [says], ‘Wow, it matches perfectly.’”

From trudging through slush to shuffling across icy paths, winter boots can be both a practical necessity and a stylish statement. The Phillipian interviewed Andover students about the footwear they are wearing throughout the winter season and how they demonstrate both purpose and flair.



SOREN HEINTZ '28

“My boots are thick and kind of look like astronaut boots, like something you’d find on a spaceship. Personally I don’t like wearing ugly winter boots, but I find these acceptable. That’s why they’re significant to me, because they’re something that I can wear while still looking good and being warm, and not have my feet get wet. These boots say a lot about my boldness. I’m a very bold person and these boots are a big statement to any outfit, so it says a lot about my personality before I even open my mouth.”



CATALINA SMITH '27

“My boots are black and leather and they go up mid-shin. My mom gave them to me, they’re actually hers, but that’s why they’re so significant. I [first] saw these boots on my mom and I was like, ‘Oh those look cute, can I have them,’ and she said yes. My inspiration for styling them mainly just comes from the stuff I have in my closet and sometimes what I see on social media. I’ll wear the boots instead of sneakers, especially during the winter. A lot of the time I’m rushing to class in the morning and I don’t want to slip on all the ice, and the boots have a lot more traction than sneakers or slippers do.”



NEVADA CHARITY '26

“I enjoy playing with interesting and unique fabrics, textures, and shapes, so I love the bright color that the boots radiate. They’re definitely a great statement piece in my closet and they show that I’m not scared to be expressive and try new and different things with what I wear. When I’m wearing these boots, I’m aware of all the attention that they’re getting. It can be easy to kind of get lost in an outfit and the way that it’s being perceived by others, but it’s important that I wear these boots and other pieces in my closet with a sense of confidence. I want people to be inspired by the fact that I’m wearing these boots so that they can also wear some more color with their outfits, bring a statement piece in, or a pop of texture, [and] just be more playful with what they wear.”



DIKKO GARBA '28

“I got the classic [Timberlands]... They’re fitty and trendy and cool. It’s a really popular shoe and a bunch of people back at home wear it so I like wearing it. They don’t really keep me warm but they have nice traction, or at least they have better traction than other shoes. [I’m inspired by] just the way you see people in my community wear it back at home in New York. My mom wears them too. It’s good to feel proud in the way you look. They aren’t for everyone, but if you wear them and look good in them, then that’s good.”

Where Faith Meets Magic: Rabbi Danny Dubin’s Mystical Performance

DANIEL ZHANG & ELIAS JEON

On Sunday, February 23, the Jewish Student Union (JSU) hosted award-winning magician and mentalist Danny Dubin. Dubin, who also serves as a rabbi, brought families and children together with a lively performance that combined the artistry of magic with the threads of Jewish faith. Whether through the excitement of magic or the sense of community in Jewish tradition, Dubin believes both paths allow people to recognize life’s everyday miracles and find deeper meaning in their lives. “In the end, both a rabbi and magician have the special role of helping others connect with life around them in meaningful ways,” said Dubin. “In our morning liturgy, we thank God for the daily miracles that are around us morning, afternoon, and evening. As a magician, it’s a humbling feeling to help create that sense of awe for audiences. And as a rabbi, I help others connect with God and [the] Jewish community in ways that hopefully help fill their lives with meaning and

a deep sense of connection.” Having performed on both large stages, like those for Google and Microsoft, and smaller ones, such as birthday parties, Dubin focuses on creating an engaging atmosphere for his audience, regardless of age. “I cherish meeting people after shows, from the youngest to the oldest of audience members. You can tell that it’s something special for certain folks to get a chance to talk with the magician, and I view it as a special role to fulfill,” said Dubin. Sunday’s performance was a family-friendly event. The raw humor and honesty brought by the children added an element of authenticity and spontaneity which Dubin does not often encounter in his typical shows. “It was such a fun crowd! I always love it when the audiences are engaging and speaking their minds, and today was no exception” he noted. “Most of my shows are for adult audiences, so it’s always fun when there are young children present. You never know what kids are going to say, and usually, their ad-lib lines are the best parts,” said Dubin. Attendees walked away

both shocked and inspired, grateful for the chance to pause their busy routines in favor of shared wonder. Board member of the JSU, Ruby Kokinos ’26, appreciated the fun lighthearted energy brought about by younger attendees, similar to Dubin. “My favorite part was probably when Danny brought younger kids up in the audience. I just think they’re always so funny and it’s probably so exciting for those kids, so it’s fun to see. I took away that sometimes it’s good to just take a break from things and attend an event that has nothing to do with school or extracurriculars, isn’t graded, and attendance isn’t taken,” said Kokinos. Above all, Dubin hopes that events like Sunday’s inspire people to remain open to life’s small miracles. As a rabbi, he wants others to see the value in connecting with Jewish traditions and the broader community; as a magician, he strives to spark astonishment and lift hearts. With each envelope of surprises and each piece of fruit holding hidden treasures, Dubin reminds us that what appears mundane might just be hidden with the unexpected, only if we choose to look closely enough.



C. TANG /THE PHILLIPIAN
Danny Dubin engaged crowds in Kemper Auditorium.

Arts & Leisure

The Phillipian Co.

Decking the John Barry Hall with Three Musical Performances

MATTHEW WEI &
CHARLIZE SOW

Over the weekend, Falls Music Center became the stage for three performances from the Music Department’s ensembles and programs: the Academy Bands, the Chamber Music Society, and the Jazz Band. These performances not only demonstrated the talent of student-musicians but also signaled the music building’s potential to shape future musical endeavors.

On Friday, the Academy Bands Concert featured performances from the Tuesday Band led by Peter Cirelli and the Thursday Band led by Ray Daniels. As the director, Daniels explained the inspirations behind the chosen pieces and the atmosphere at the concert.

“It’s February [and] it’s Black History Month, and I did want to do something, and this piece ‘Of Our New Day Begun’ was the choice. This music was not easy, and that’s partly the reason we played it. I thought the ensemble did an amazing job. The energy was there. The audience really received it well and I feel like [we did] all of my goals of being an artist, an educator, and serving my audience,” said Daniels.

Brandon Fu ’25, the principal clarinetist of Thursday Band, reflected on the group’s first performance in the new building, detailing the preparation and rehearsal process.

“We clicked as a unit. It was a really strong performance and overall very enjoyable. It’s also the first large music department ensemble performance in Falls, which was a phenomenal experience.

We have about seven or eight rehearsals per term, and we just play music for an hour and a half. We volunteer to do it at the beginning of the year, and it’s just something that we love to do as a group,” said Fu.

On Saturday, the Andover Chamber Society hosted two performances featuring the variety of small ensembles that have been working together for the last term. Holly Barnes, the director of the program, discussed the range in genres and styles demonstrated in the performances.

“When I choose repertoire, I choose something that will challenge the players, but also something they can accomplish in eight weeks, because that’s how many coachings they get. And then I try to think about the program, to have very different genres, so it was good to have some contemporary music, which we had at this concert, so we’re not listening to all the same composers. Everybody was really well-prepared, and it was great,” said Barnes.

Many performers appreciated both the final performance, and the learning process behind it. Niccolo Lee-Suk ’28 described the importance of nonverbal communication in a chamber group that allowed for different parts to seamlessly blend together.

“I was part of a piano trio with William Ge [’25] and Bruce Ru [’28]. We performed the Mendelssohn piano trio in C minor, second movement. Communicating with the group without words, you have to sort of make eye contact, and I think since we’re all very passionate musicians, we sort of get lost in the music, and



S. BROWN /THE PHILLIPIAN

Peter Cirelli led the Tuesday Band as they performed in Falls Music Center.

kind of forget to look at each other.”

On Sunday, the Academy Jazz Bands featured both smaller ensembles and a larger band. Cirelli praised the group’s ability to adapt to new pieces and sounds, the result of hard work across the term.

“This was our first time performing in this new concert hall with the band, so we had to get accustomed to that a little bit, but overall we really like it here. We could hear each other very well, and I thought that the performance went well. Some places

are more live than other places on stage, so some instruments playing in their normal way sounded louder than other instruments playing in their normal way. So we’re getting accustomed to that, but that’s all part of the learning process,” said Cirelli.

For many performers, rehearsals were more than repetitive lines. According to musician Anny Wang ’26, they fostered community, creating an environment where everyone could bond over the music. Wang shared her personal experience with the Jazz band community, reflecting

on her friendships that contributed to the fulfilling experience.

“I really like the tunes that we played today, especially Snake, which was the last one, and I think that the Jazz band community is very close, and we’re all good friends, so it’s good vibes. I’d say for our small jazz band, we really came together strong at the end. We had some new members join, [so] we were not very close together at the start, but then we were all able to deliver the dynamics and music content all together. So that’s the rewarding part,” said Wang.

Bowing Beyond Boundaries: Music Instructor Ángela Varo Moreno Unstrings Tradition with Jazz Violin

ADEN HWANG &
DANIEL LIU

With roots in the flamenco-rich culture of Southern Spain and a career spanning classical, contemporary, and jazz music, Ángela Varo Moreno brings her unique perspective to the Andover music community. A jazz violin instructor and supervisor to the Andover-Lawrence Strings program, she combines technical precision with confident improvisation and pushes the boundaries of violin.

Varo Moreno grew up in a rural part of Southern Spain in a home where music was fused into her everyday life. Influenced by her dad, a music educator, and the role of music in her family’s culture, she was immersed in flamenco from an early age. This upbringing encouraged her to embrace music education as a passion.

“My dad founded the music school in my town, so I was able to receive a proper music education, even in this small town called Baena. We’re from a Romani, Andalusia [and] Dominican background, so music is deeply embedded in our culture. Music education there is not glorified, it’s more organic. It becomes part of everyday life, like the way we cook or talk. I learned flamenco and music by simply being around my grandma and mom, listening to singing, dancing, and being involved in music [as] part of the family,” said Varo Moreno.

Varo Moreno’s teaching philosophy is shaped by the values of mentorship and bonding, something she was first exposed to through her family. As a private lesson

instructor at Andover, she approaches teaching with a mindset toward bonding and nurturing creativity. She strives to encourage her students to express themselves through music.

“When I came to the United States six years ago, I was lucky enough to be mentored by incredible people who opened my eyes and hearts... These people have defined for me what the role of a mentor is. They showed me the power of music, community, and how change happens through that. That’s what I try to bring to my students at [Andover]. It’s not about me being the teacher or an authority figure. It’s about working together, building relationships, and helping them find confidence and fall in love with jazz. I feel deeply connected to my heritage, and I work hard to ensure my voice is heard. That’s something I pass on to my students: if you work hard and stay true to yourself, you can achieve anything,” said Varo Moreno.

Alongside private lessons, Varo Moreno assists in the Andover-Lawrence Strings Youth Development Program, where Andover students teach various stringed instruments to children from Lawrence. Watching the instructors collaborate and form bonds with each other has been a defining experience for her. Further, sharing a similar cultural background with many of the students from Lawrence allowed her to find a connection in her guidance.

“It’s been amazing to see both students from [Andover] and the kids from Lawrence. It’s developing not only a teacher-student relationship but [also helps] the students build relationships with the kids. Some of them have be-

come like older siblings to the kids from Lawrence, and it’s just such a pleasure to help people fall more and more in love with music. Many of the kids are Latinos, and I’m Hispanic as well, so having that connection is nice for them to see someone close to them as their teacher. It’s been beautiful to get to know the kids and their backgrounds, and to help them grow,” said Varo Moreno.

While the violin is not considered a frontline instrument in jazz, Varo Moreno emphasizes that it is important to work hard and overcome the challenges of not fitting in. While brass such as trumpet and trombones may receive more recognition as “frontline” jazz instruments, Varo Moreno believes that the violin choice can bring a new and unique sound to jazz.

“I love the violin, it’s been a huge part of my life. When you think of jazz, a lot of people forget about violinists like Stéphane Grappelli, who were incredibly important. There’s a bit of stigma around the violin in jazz; people don’t always see it as a frontline instrument. I joke with my colleagues that I’m not a horn player, but I don’t want to be seen just as a string player either. I want to be considered the same as a horn player, but there are also things I do that horn players can’t. Over time, I’ve realized that everything in life is about love, action, and time. If you work hard, you can overcome any challenges, no matter what instrument you play,” said Varo Moreno.

Over the course of her musical career, Varo Moreno has studied classical music, jazz music, contemporary production, and composition. Through support from schol-



COURTESY OF ÁNGELA VARO MORENO

Ángela Varo Moreno believes that the violin brings a new and unique sound to jazz.

ships and mentors, she has had the opportunity to tour, perform with different ensembles, and record with other artists. Currently, she is working on releasing her own music, infused with her personal story.

“My album is coming out soon. It’s called ‘Dança del Aire’ and it will be released on the first day of spring, March 20. I have a couple of singles coming before that —

one on February 28, and another on March 9. I’m doing it with a label called Habitable Records and it’s a reflection of what it means to carry my culture over my shoulders... my family’s story, how my culture connects with other cultures, and the pleasure [of being] with friends. It’s full of flamenco and jazz influences, and I’m really excited about it,” said Varo Moreno.

Arts & Leisure

The Phillipian Co.

Student Songwriters Shine at the Annual Sunset Café and Lounge

DANIEL ZHANG &
ELIAS JEON

Last Sunday, the Gershwin-Godowsky Court in Falls Music Center came alive as students and faculty gathered for the annual Sunset Café and Lounge. Organized by Music Instructor Holly Barnes, the space offered students an opportunity to showcase their compositions, with some performing on stage for the first time. With cozy lights and treats on every table, the atmosphere was just right for a relaxing afternoon of music.

Barnes explained the vast preparation for this event. From screwing light bulbs onto the hanging lights or buying immense amounts of food from Costco, the event required a day and a half of work for an hour-long event. However, Barnes believed it was worth the effort.

“They had a good time. Especially in the Winter Term, it’s nice to have something fun to look forward to. We always do it on Sunday, because Sunday at 4 p.m., what are you doing at 4? You’re tired of doing homework, but it’s not quite time for dinner, it’s a good time [for a performance],” said Barnes.

Barnes explained that this tradition began in smaller spaces, such as the Timken and Underwood rooms. With the opening of the new music center, this special event has found a new home in the larger space.

“It was wonderful. We have made the other spaces really cozy, it was really nice in the Timken room, but we

exceeded fire codes so we couldn’t be there anymore. Then we moved to the Underwood room, which was better, but it’s so nice to have it in our own space and invite the community to come into this space. It felt really great,” said Barnes.

This year’s Sunset Café featured eight student performances from Barnes’ twelve-person songwriting class, plus a few guest performers. Among those performing was Alberto Agudo ’25, whose energetic melody described the story of “Francisco,” an artist who struggled to gain initial support.

“I performed an in-between a techno and house song, because techno tends to be a bit more instrumental or rap-based.... It’s a song that narrates the story of this artist called Francisco, that no one ever appreciated, and no one ever believed in him... I wanted to put that feeling of being unsupported into a character. I believe so many artists can relate,” said Agudo.

Contrastingly, Emily Wu ’25 performed a quieter ballad, exploring themes of inner conflict, which she originally wrote for a film soundtrack prompt. An experienced performer, Wu was excited to showcase her work for the third year in a row.

“The prompt [for the competition] was feeling lost. The premise was why am I here and what is inside of me. Knowing that other people are doing raps and up-tempo things, I decided to take out a ballad, since this is something that I am already really familiar with,” said Wu.

For Hannah Oh ’27, this event was her chance to share her composition “The Boy I Never Knew,” an emotional piece about the painful realization that your partner is not the person you once believed them to be. Though sharing her personal experiences meant stepping outside of her comfort zone, Oh was grateful to take part in the event.

“I’ve mainly done music for around 11 years now, and I’ve been playing the cello, but I wanted to go outside of that and compose my own songs... It was really nice to be able to spend a lot of time on this and be able to present it to a lot of people. The most challenging part is being vulnerable and sharing personal experiences with a lot of people, and even writing a song about it. But overall it was worth it,” said Oh.

Finally, Brandon Fu ’25 premiered his two original songs “Osibiphia” which examined the struggle to find one’s place in society, and “Passenger Seat,” a fun piece about falling in love with the person in the passenger seat. According to Fu, the warm and inviting environment made it significantly easier for him to perform his new pieces.

“[The audience] was clapping along and singing with me, which really gave me a lot of confidence. It made me feel good. It was my first time ever singing those songs in front of people, so it was pretty nerve-wracking, but it worked out,” said Fu.

Barnes encourages any and all students, regardless of experience, to put themselves out there and perform. According to Barnes and performers, the Sunset Café and Lounge is an incredibly welcoming environment, ideal for anyone wanting to try their hand at songwriting and performing.



I. PADMAWAR /THE PHILLIPIAN

Emily Wu ’25 performed an introspective original song.

phone and sing for the class, so that they don’t get so nervous,” said Barnes. She continued, “Some kids performed for the first time ever. You do not have to be a professional singer, it is a very chill atmosphere, and you can get up and show what you have done.”

“They [the students] got to pick what they performed. We did a little soundcheck on Friday, to give them a chance to learn how to use the micro-

Black People Got Talent 24-25: Celebrating Black Creativity at Andover

NATHANIEL DAROCHA &
TAYLA STEMPSON

Black creativity took center stage on February 21 as Afro-Latine-American Society (AfLatAm), the Black Student Union (BSU), and the African Student Association (ASA) hosted Black People Got Talent. Students packed Susie’s to support a diverse range of acts, including music, dance, and comedy. As part of Black History Month celebrations, the showcase provided an opportunity for students to celebrate Black culture in a joyful and supportive environment.

Black People Got Talent was hosted by Maddie Redmond ’25 and Jaceil Britton ’25, who kept the energy high all night with their lighthearted humor, improvised bits, and even musical moments.

“Jaceil and I started prepping about a week before. We thought of our theme, which was ‘Try to Work Harder,’ and picked a song to come out to. But as we tend to do, we wrote our rap minutes before the talent show started. We chose the beat and everything very quickly, which helped us get into that creative flow rather than planning too far in advance. Overall, it took about a week to plan everything” Redmond shared.

Over the years, Redmond and Britton have established themselves as a classic MC duo on campus. This was their second year hosting

Black People Got Talent, and the pair returned to the stage eager to have a good time and help showcase the diverse talents of Black students.

Redmond continued, “It was great to get the crowd’s energy going. That’s my favorite part of being an MC [is] seeing how the crowd reacts and getting everybody involved. Any crowd interactions that night were really fun. The talent was amazing this year. The den was packed with so many people, and it was a great showing. I’m a little sad I won’t get to go to another one.”

Bailey Jean-Pierre ’26, a member of a singing group “Tall, Dark, and Handsome,” decided to step outside of his comfort zone, and participate in this celebration of Black community. The preparation process included frequent rehearsals in Falls Music Center.

“Honestly, we just thought it would be a fun experience. [Papa Paintsil ’26] called me two weeks ago and said, ‘Hey, there’s this one part I think you’d be good at. What do you think?’ I was interested and decided to see what it was about. We started practicing a little, and I liked the song and the rhythm, so we went for it.”

Jean-Pierre continued, “It went really well. There was a lot of talent and excitement. I do think more than eight people should participate. I know some talented people who didn’t sign up, but they



I. PADMAWAR /THE PHILLIPIAN

Student performers flocked the stage following the end of the event and sang one final song.

should. This event should definitely continue in the coming years.”

In addition to the consistent theme of fun throughout the night, the event’s inclusion of cultural representation and appreciation did not go unnoticed by attendees. Audience member Mwaita Nyakujarah ’27 specifically highlighted the group Amapiano Warriors.

“My favorite performance, I’m a little bit biased, was the Amapiano Warriors’ performance. They were a dance group including [Wambui Nyiha ’25], [Rosie Juma ’26], and [Tisha Nhuele ’25] and they performed a series of amapiano moves. Amapiano is a type of music that was developed in South Africa, and it was really interesting to hear music from my home country presented to this American audience,” said Nyakujarah.

Nneka Ezeike ’26, board member of the ASA who helped plan various Black History Month Events, appreciated Black People Got Talent’s ability to bring the entire Andover community together.

“It was a great opportunity not just for the Black community to come together but for the whole school to appreciate Black talent in a way that isn’t necessarily official. It was a strong community-building experience with a focus on Black talent, which doesn’t happen often.” Ezeike said.

WRITE FOR ARTS

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