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Students Reflect on Black History Month Gala



By ELAINE QIAO and LILY RAMPE

On Feb. 3, Black-identifying students gathered for the Academy's second-ever affinity-only Black History Month Gala. The idea was first conceived

by alumnus Ifeoma Ajufor '22 last year and continued this year by students and faculty. At the gala, students were able to celebrate their culture, history, and community while enjoying a variety of soul food and music.

Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) proctors, faculty, and student leaders collaborated to realize the Black History Month Gala. "Affinity group leaders like Ethan-Judd Barthelmy and Keanen Andrews put a lot of work into planning it. It

was like a big surprise for everyone attending," prep Alex Trotman said.

Working on the gala was senior Keanen Andrews' OMA proctor project. "My inspiration for the event came during my prep year. During Black History

Month we had a Black chef come to campus and cook for the students on campus," Andrews said. "Since then, there hasn't been any sort of similar event. Knowing that every OMA proctor does an OMA project, I wanted to do something revolving around

food. It just so happened to be that my parents are also Black chefs."

"They've been cooking for over 20 years," Andrews continued. "They've owned a restaurant, they've owned a food truck, they even have a

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Photo courtesy of EJ Barthelmy

Lamont Poet Rita Dove Dazzles Audience



2022-23 Lamont Poet Rita Dove

Courtesy of University of Iowa

By SOPHIE MA '24

On Feb. 22, award-winning Lamont Poet Rita Dove graced the Academy with a reading of her latest poetry collection, *Playlist for the Apocalypse*.

Dove is a poet, novelist, essayist, playwright, and educator who is the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize. She is the only poet honored with both the National Humanities Medal and the National Medal of Arts and possesses 29 honorary doctorates to date. Dove also served as the US Poet Laureate from 1993 to 1995 and the Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets from 2005 to 2011.

Dove's *Playlist for the Apocalypse* (W.W. Norton, 2021) was a finalist for the 2022 *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize and the 2021 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work. *The Boston Globe* also described it to be "a piercing, unflinching new volume

[that] offers necessary music for our tumultuous present" from "perhaps the best public poet we have."

"She brings poetry into every room. She heard the music in us and in our poems, even when we could not."

In her reading in the Academy's Assembly Hall, Dove selected poems from various sections of her collection, including but not limited to "Prose in a Small Space," "Girls on the Town, 1946," "Naji, 14, Philadelphia," "The Spring Cricket Considers the Question of Negritude," "Beside the Golden Door," "World-Wide Welcome," "The Angry Odes: An Introduction," and "Shakespeare Doesn't Care." Between poems, Dove naturally wove in

stories about her students, mother, daughter, and memories of the pandemic, among other tales and anecdotes. At one point, she was joined by former student and George Bennett Fellow Raisa Tolchinsky for a reading of "Declaration of Interdependence," during which the two alternated lines in an engaging and rich dialogue.

In Tolchinsky's introduction of Dove, she praised Dove's ability to capture a multitude of emotions and experiences in her poetry — to grasp the essence of life in words. Tolchinsky also reminisced about her days as Dove's student at the University of Virginia.

"She brings poetry into every room," Tolchinsky said. "She heard the music in us and in our poems, even when we could not. She heard it in our panic and our questions, our scrambled syntax and furrowed brows.

She heard it in the big moments...and small details."

"She heard the music so clearly and raised it up so that you couldn't help but eventually hear it too," Tolchinsky continued. "Sitting in a room with her, you knew you mattered."

Explaining the title of her collection, Dove sought to redefine the meaning of "apocalypse." Of the term, she said, "It's not merely destruction and death. It's also revelation. It's having something be revealed to you that is so momentous that it changes the world as you know it. Whether you decide to make that a dystopian universe or whether you decide to go into it and change it is something that all of us have to do."

Dove also compared our current times to an apocalypse.

After the reading, Dove

Academy Gathers for Black History Month Assembly

By JOONYOUNG HEO and FORREST ZENG

The student body gathered on Feb. 6 for a special assembly celebrating Black History Month. With an engaging presentation that won laughter and applause from the audience, the event was a great success.

The assembly was hosted by Black Students of Excellence (BSE) to recognize the achievements by African Americans and their central role in U.S. history, continuing a nationwide tradition of honoring February as Black History Month. It featured a student-led production that both celebrated the event, and we were told we explored its significance,

and spotlighted the Black community at Exeter.

Organization behind the assembly was largely driven by students in BSE. "I've known since prep year that I wanted to do something like this," senior Hope Flowers said. "In the last few days of January, my friends and I were talking about how

"The assembly was just a way for me to showcase my Blackness and the Blackness of my peers."

much we wanted a Black History Month assembly. So we just asked around, and we were told we should email Mr. Miller.

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answered a few questions from the audience, exploring her use of Greek mythology in her poetry, her creative process, how she deals with writer's block, and what she defines as a good poem.

In response to the question about what defines good poetry, Dove said, "I am constantly being surprised by poems. Just as there are so many different dialects and stories in life and even languages, I find that the way that I write a poem is just one way. There

are a lot of others."

Nevertheless, Dove left the audience with one metric. "In the writing of a poem or in the reading of a poem that reaches beyond the merely kind-of okay, the self disappears entirely," she said. "Even if it's about something that is very personal...when you read it, time falls away and you fall away. You become larger than the body that you carry."

The reading concluded with much applause and was followed by a book signing.

OMA Organizes Black Affinity Luncheon

By ETHAN DING and LUCY JUNG

On Feb. 22, students attended an affinity luncheon organized by Black Students of Excellence, Transitions, and the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA).

Dr. Trent Masiki, an Assistant Professor of Africana Studies at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, was scheduled to meet with a

selected group of 20 students during the luncheon. However, he was not able to attend due to an illness. In his place, New Faculty Coordinator Courtney Marshall stepped in to help facilitate the event.

Associate Dean of Multicultural Affairs Hadley Camilus talked about the selection process for students. "Generally, when I coordinate events, I seek co-sponsorship from clubs and/or affinity

groups. In this case, I reached out to affinity groups that have Black students and asked if they'd be interested in participating. Black Students of Excellence and Transitions expressed support for the event, so a total of 20 of their members were invited to participate since the luncheon was intended to be a small gathering of students."

Camilus also explained the planning process: "I have

an interest in broadening how we think about the Black experience, collectively, and happen to know somebody whose scholarship offered that opportunity to do just that. Dr. Masiki...I've known him for over 20 years and am familiar with his scholarship involving the study of Afro-Latino authors...After securing some possible dates with him, I reached out to some student leaders to see if they'd be

interested in co-sponsoring the event."

When asked about his intentions for holding the event, Camilus said, "I'm heavily invested in bringing joy to our students, and offering affirming experiences. The grind here is real. Seeing Black students revel in having an authentic Jamaican meal while talking about their favorite Black authors was dope...Seeing their faces as

they dug into their meals was my favorite part because I know the feeling they were expressing. It's an expression of familiarity in a place that often feels unfamiliar."

Camilus also has plans to hold similar luncheons in the future, "Throughout the school year we celebrate the heritage and history months in a variety of ways. This won't be the last time we have an affinity luncheon for students of a particular identity. I look forward to coordinating events of the like in the future."

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Students Reflect on Black History Month Gala Cont.



Upper Jodi Henry waits to receive food from Director of Equity and Inclusion Stephanie Bramlett.

Courtesy of EJ Barthelemy

catering company so people can hire them to cater any type of food they want. So I wanted to bring them out to campus and [do] a soul food dinner during Black History Month because I know people would very much enjoy the food to remind them of home...Also it's a good meal to have in the cold winter."

The gala took collaboration between many students. "I also worked with EJ," Andrews said. "We did it together."

"I wanted to make it more than just serving food, and I wanted to teach people a little bit about the historical ties between soul food and the American South and culture."

Senior EJ Barthelemy incorporated his passion for photography into the gala. "I did a photoshoot with about 10 or 12 Black students in

the studio, and we projected a slideshow of the pictures on the screen throughout the event," Barthelemy said. "With this project, I aimed to give people another medium to freely express their identities and personalities."

Many other students assisted as well. "I helped out with some of the decorations by setting them up in Grainger, and setting up the photo booth," lower Eliana Hall added.

Andrews sought to add an educational dimension to the gala as well. "I wanted to make it more than just serving food, and I wanted to teach people a little bit about the historical ties between soul food and the American South and culture," Andrews said.

Soul food is an ethnic cuisine traditionally prepared and eaten by African Americans and originating in the southern United States.

Students described the catered food to be a major highlight of the gala. "The food was incredible," Trotman said. "It was made

by Keanen's family, and it reminded me of home."

Upper Janelle Bobb agreed. "The food was some of the best food I've had during my entire Exeter experience. The candied yams were delicious, but my favorite feature of the meal was the mac and cheese."

Barthelemy thanked the faculty involved in realizing the gala. "Dean Camilius and Courtney Shaw spearheaded this event and made it all possible. The work they put into this allowed us all to come together and have an amazing time," he said.

Through the hard work of students and faculty, attendees described having an incredible time. Bobb recalled lasting memories from the gala. "It was great being around a bunch of people with similar experiences as me. Toward the end of the gala, we took pictures, danced, and chatted among friends. It was just a nice time overall," said Bobb.

Hall agreed. "The music was great and it

built community by dancing to songs we enjoy. Coming together in our dance circle allowed everyone to feel comfortable."

Upper Quinn Coaxum reflected on the stress-free environment and outfits. "Any excuse to dress up is a fun one in my opinion. I think it's nice to see everyone in their best outfits looking great, taking pictures that you're gonna remember years later, just having a good time talking about nothing. We are not worried about homework. There's no stress that's involved with it. So it's just a good space, good time to look nice and be with your friends," Coaxum said.

Looking towards future Black History Month events, students that attended this event have hopes of expanding and improving the event in coming years.

Barthelemy said, "This was only the second time we've had the event. Ifeoma Ajufo '22 put the first one together last year. So my vision is to see this event grow as much as possible. I think it brought many people joy and deserves to be a lasting tradition at Exeter."

Trotman agreed, "I, along with many

others in the Black community believe that an increase in funding from the Academy would be beneficial. By supporting affinity groups like Afro-Latinx Exonian Society (ALES), Students of Caribbean Ancestry (SOCA), Black Students of Excellence (BSE), Young Brothers Society (YBS), and Transitions financially, we can have more events, and educate more Exonians about Black history."

"I think it brought many people joy and deserves to be a lasting tradition at Exeter."

"It'd be nice to do things outside of Black History Month," Coaxum added. "Just because it's technically Black History Month doesn't mean that there shouldn't be events during other months as well."

Andrews reflected on the Academy's Black History Month celebrations as a whole, saying,

"OMA built a very vast kind of curriculum [with] things that we wanted to get done throughout Black History Month, [such as] inviting guest speakers, having food events, having opportunities to see each other, and see[ing] Black culture prevalent on campus. I love that they were able to work with not only OMA proctors, but also students."

Andrews continued, remarking on the importance of such programming. "Whether it was showing Black Panther in the Forum or taking students out to see Jo Kelley or listening to Rita Dove speak, [these events] makes us feel seen and present on campus. Thanks to the Academy [and] thanks to OMA for all their efforts to make Black History Month better and better every single year," Andrews said.

Barthelemy echoed Andrews' sentiment. "I think that this is a time to come together and celebrate our heritage and also our presence on campus. This is one of the greatest senses of community that I've felt here at Exeter, and I think a lot of people feel the same way."



Seniors Kaylee Bennett and EJ Barthelemy pose and smile at the camera.

Courtesy of Layla Whitaker



Attendees at the Gala pose for a group photo.

Courtesy of Courtney Shaw

Academy Gathers for Black History Month Assembly Cont.

We did, but we never thought it would actually happen."

"The goal was not only to give recognition and representation to the Black students and faculty on campus but also to educate the school on Black History Month and what it means," Flowers continued. "I can say with confidence that both were achieved."

For some, the assembly was an opportunity to embrace their identity. "The assembly was just a way for me to showcase my Blackness and the Blackness of my peers," upper Yoeku Sam said.

Most of the presentation consisted of a student-produced video, edited by Sam, that featured interviews from students and faculty. The assembly also featured

live performances.

Upper Dissandou Becolli was one of the performers, showcasing a self-written rap. "The co-heads of BSE asked me to produce a rap with the simple theme 'Black History Month,' so I put on an instrumental and wrote some relevant lyrics," Becolli explained.

The interviews included in the video spotlighted Black-identifying students at Exeter. "We went around campus filming interviews with Black faculty and Black students on campus," senior Riches Afolabi said. "We made sure to make use of opportunities to interview people at the Black History Month gala and at BSE meetings."

The video also featured a dance segment with Exeter step dance teams Precision

and OutKast. Lower Kenzie Carty helped organize the skit. "The coheads of Precision did a skit, and we were having a dance battle to talk about the history of step," Carty said. "I think that was meaningful especially because the history of step is rooted in Black history."

The assembly garnered positive feedback from the student body. "It was a great experience seeing Black people being celebrated and the culmination of hard work from the committee," senior Angie Wah said. "It was a symbol for progress and acceptance."

"I think it was a great effort," prep Tristan Price said. "It told me that our community recognizes there's room for growth and the need for more acceptance and understanding. The

assembly meant a lot in that sense."

Other students commented on the efficacy of the video. "I liked that the video appealed to the pop culture sensibilities of youth," senior Chloe Zhu said. "Faculty follies and things like that allows the audience to connect at a deeper level, and that successfully communicates how important an issue is for a very large demographic on campus."

"The video was great," upper Katelyn Cui said. "It was nice to see my peers involved in such a large-scale campus activity. There was a lot of good energy and everyone was in the mood to celebrate. I think we have a habit of overgeneralizing Black culture, however, I'm glad there's at least a

specific space to give the representation it deserves."

"It told me that our community recognizes there's room for growth and the need for more acceptance and understanding."

For the student organizers, being able to organize and present this assembly carried similar value. "It's something I always wanted as a part of Black History Month programming," Flowers said. "A lot of [the month] is focused on bringing Black people into the Exeter community and talking to us, which I

enjoy and appreciate. But I felt there was a lack of programming about Black people actually in the Academy. So being able to host this assembly, and see everyone laugh at the video and listen to Black students and Black faculty members, meant a lot."

"It felt rewarding to see representation of the Black community at the assembly," Becolli said. "The majority of Black students were featured in the video and I think it helped display an unofficially recognized cornerstone of Exeter life and culture."

Sam concluded, "The assembly was really an effort to show Black excellence in a fun, engaging way. That was definitely something we achieved."

Life

» **KELLEY**
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Academy Screens *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*



Courtesy of Walt Disney Pictures

By **ETHAN DING** and **JOONYOUNG HEO**

A screening of *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* was held on Feb. 11 for the school community. Organized in honor of Black History Month, it was a great opportunity for the student body to gather and relax on a Saturday night.

The event was jointly hosted by the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) and the Student Activities Office. The film had been released in Nov. 2022 as a sequel to the first *Black Panther* movie and featured a diverse cast, celebrating people and culture through a rich storyline.

Students attended the screening for a number of reasons. The choice of the film itself attracted many. "I decided to go because I loved *Black Panther*," lower Aymeric Dauge-Roth said. "I saw the first one with my friends and I really enjoyed it. I wanted to see the sequel and I wasn't disappointed."

"I hadn't yet gotten the chance to watch the *Black*

Panther sequel," upper Vera Aimunmondion said. "The first film was really important to me and my family. It was the only time my dad ever took us to the movie theater because we don't really go to theaters. So I wanted to watch the second one and I saw the opportunity, and there was no reason not to go."

Other students attended the screening by chance. "The dance show that day had just finished, and we wanted to kill some time before the second one," lower Preeti Jain said. "My friends and I stopped by to check it out, and we found a bunch of snacks in EPAC and decided on staying. It was a great atmosphere."

"I wasn't watching the dance show that night," lower Sofia Wang said. "We didn't have much to do. So we figured we might as well go to the Forum and watch the movie. It seemed interesting."

The atmosphere in the Forum, where the screening was held, was a particular draw for some students. "I really appreciated the opportunity to

view this film as a community with my friends, as opposed to a theater full of strangers," senior Chloe Zhu said. "I saw the first *Black Panther* movie with friends and it was very meaningful that they set this up."

For many of the attendees, *Wakanda Forever* was every bit in keeping with the theme of Black History Month as it was an entertaining film. Specifically, the film's cultural significance largely spoke to the audience.

"I think it displays the beauty of African culture," Aimunmondion said. "They're not drawing from one specific culture—it's a plethora of different African cultures mixed together. It also mixed in the theme of resistance found all throughout Black history. I really enjoyed what they did with the film."

"Some people might think, maybe, it was too playful or not serious enough for a 'heritage month' movie," Aimunmondion continued. "They might have preferred a documentary of some kind. But sometimes it's nice to see fun stories inspired by the Black experience on the big screen. That's what this event was."

Other attendees found that the screening itself fostered the exploration of these cultures. "It was a great way for the community to engage with the media without feeling intimidated," Jain said. "It was a natural choice. And there were practical implications relevant for us too—even the first part of the film handled themes of colonization and public perception of African countries."

"I love that we hold these screenings on campus," Dauge-Roth said. "It's somewhere people can go with their friends and have a good time, and it's nice the clubs were able to fit it into Black History Month. That was their goal, and they definitely succeeded."

Community Meets Jo Kelley

By **ROX PARK '25**

From a first-generation college student to corporate worker, to owner of a local café Cup of Joe, and Assistant Mayor of Portsmouth, NH, Joanna "Jo" Kelley has done it all.

On Feb. 17, Kelley joined an eager group of Exonians in the Forum to share her experiences as the first Black elected official of Portsmouth, NH, as well as her journey to where she is today.

Having lived in Portsmouth for all of her life, Kelley certainly knows the ins and outs of the city. Yet she noted that her biracial identity (Kelley is half Black, half white), has caused some people, especially on the campaign trail, to ask her where she's "really" from. During her campaign for assistant mayor in 2021, she had to show a photo of herself as a young child in front of the local Strawberry Banke Museum to prove she is actually a Portsmouth native.

"Just because you don't think I should be from here, just because you don't think that people like me live here, doesn't mean I'm not from here," Kelley said.

Before being the first person in her family to attend college, Kelley shared her experience growing up in and out of foster care, as well as with her conservative grandparents. "I think that I'm a little more understanding when it comes to where people come from on certain topics," she answered in response to a question by Dean of Multicultural Affairs Hadley Camilus on how this conservative upbringing affected her. "I'm trying to bridge the gap, and learn where that balance is."

"I'm biracial," she said, "raised a hundred percent by my White family. To me, the terms 'Black' and 'White' are very identifying factors. The White part of my family is well represented. It's the Black part of me, that predominant part of me, that I am equally as proud of and somewhat prouder of because of the struggles that inherently come with being a person of color that I've had to overcome." Kelley's racial identity became something that defined her experiences, even when she didn't want it to. For example, Kelley often has to prove she's related to her niece when she picks her up from daycare. Or how there's some confusion when she mentions that her grandfather is a mason at the temple. Or when she pushes for DEI training at work, people assume she's referring only to

race topics.

"Everything I touch on," she says, "somebody's gonna bring it back to me being Black, which isn't always a negative, but it's about equality for everyone we're talking about, you know what I mean? Socio-economics, race, gender, sexuality, handicaps,

mental education levels, all different types of things."

Other times, Kelley feels the responsibility to champion her heritage in her role in office. She described the time when she met President Joseph Biden last year, and chose to put her hair into braids in order to represent the Black community.

"It's important for me that, if a little girl looks at that photo and sees me with braids, they can know that they can have braids and meet the president."

When asked by facilitator and Assistant Director of Equity and Inclusion Kevin Pajaro-Mariñez what Black resistance means to her, Kelley said that first and foremost, it means "giving a voice to people that don't feel that they have a voice. Black resistance is resisting the narrative that you have to assimilate, that you have to lose your identity to be an American. So much about it to me is respecting the culture, expanding it, and making sure that the history is known."

In this context, she shared the stories of Wentworth Cheswell, a mixed-race man who was one of the riders with Paul Revere up to Portsmouth in the 1700s and became the first African-American ever elected during the Revolutionary War. Another she shared was the story of Oney Judge Staines, a woman enslaved to George and Martha Washington who escaped to New Hampshire. Kelley emphasized that both of these African-American figures have an importance in the state's history but are never celebrated, and it is her mission to change that.

Other goals she has in mind (aside from becoming the first Black Delegate in the Federal Government for New Hampshire) during her office are making sure that housing and food pantries are accessible to everyone. As someone who grew up without those resources, she feels especially accountable to provide support to people in need.

That accountability extends to her personal business, Cup of Joe, which is a much-loved local café in Portsmouth. Five years ago and despite her personal

dislike of coffee, she opened it with her business partner who is coincidentally also named Joe Kelley and one of the founders of the Thirsty Moose Chain. Over time, Cup of Joe became both a booming success and a safe place for her employees.

"It's the Black part of me, that predominant part of me, that I am equally as proud of and somewhat prouder of because of the struggles that inherently come with being a person of color that I've had to overcome."

Kelley's pride lies in her ability to offer generous wages, paid family leave, and paid vacations to her bartenders and baristas. This fosters a supportive environment that has grown into a community, especially for younger women, people of color, and queer-identifying people, and has allowed her to reach out and touch the lives of others.

Sitting in the forum in front of such a powerful, ambitious, and accomplished woman was an inspiration. Before leaving, she imparted three lessons from her various careers as advice to her listeners.

1) Her personal motto: If she can help someone in five minutes, even if that just means a reference to another person or a single phone call, she'll make the time to do it.

2) Remove yourself from decisions, switch your perspective, and make sure that you would still make them if you weren't personally involved.

3) You really have to like yourself, because the world will chew you up and try to tell you who you are, but in the end, you're the person who will support yourself the most.

The assistant mayor acknowledged how far she has come: "I never thought I'd be here. Now, I get to come and do things like this. I get to meet people. I get to go and testify in Concord on legislation that will repeal the Divisive Concepts Bill. I was blown away by learning about the appreciation and awareness of different cultures here at Exeter. Knowing how many other first-generation students there are here is amazing."

Meditation Spotlight: Cedric Moecklin

By **AYAAN AKHTAR** and **ALAYSHAZHANG**

Q: What was the main focus of your meditation and what inspired it?

A: The meditation mostly had two focuses, but the unifying theme [between them] was the power that taking a step back from something or getting some distance on something allows you to sort of see it more clearly to get a better perspective. That theme came out from my experience as an immigrant from Switzerland in the US and being a little bit separate from American culture. I feel like I'm able to see both of those more clearly than someone who has lived in only one country for their whole life. On a smaller scale, I lived with a host family during a year abroad in Spain, and I was able to see how my host family did things and how that was different from my family.

Q: How did you organize your ideas while playing around with those metaphors, such as the mountains, the guitar, etcetera?

A: I really like the idea of being higher up and being away from something as a metaphor for being able to see it better. I tried to tie that into other parts of the meditation as well. When I was talking about my friend Alex who claimed that he didn't

have a culture and it kind of stuck with me as an example of something that only someone who really hasn't seen their own culture clearly could say. Then I was like, 'well, I could tie that to how he lives in New Hampshire and there are no mountains around here on the sea coast, right?' It sort of presented itself as I went along that these images could keep coming back. I think that the concepts came first and the images came later. I saw the images fit really well, and I just kind of put them where they fit.

Q: How do you think your experience as both a guitarist and just a musician influenced your writing?

A: I would say music definitely is a way that I learn or through which I experienced the world. The creative expression of music can also convey some of the images of the mountains actually. It's an image that is simple, but it conveys a lot of the meaning of my med, it carries the meditation pretty hard, I'd say. I think music, like the meditation, has the power to convey very personal things. Even though I'm probably the only one who has access to the full meaning of all of that, I like the idea that the images I talked about and the music I played connected to people and gave them their own version of the feeling that I get when I listen to it.

Q: What do you want your audience to take away from

the meditation?

A: I would like them to think about their lives and think about how they interact with the world, what things they take for granted, what things they should appreciate more, and what things they might want to change in their lives. Just realize that you can be blind. You need to realize that and then recognize when you haven't been seeing something clearly

"Just realize that you can be blind. You need to realize that and then recognize when you haven't been seeing something clearly and then grow from there."

and then grow from there.

Q: Do you have any advice for your audience, especially younger students in writing and meditation?

A: I think taking the time to slow down and look back as well as look forward. Because I feel like at Exeter while we do spend a lot of time looking forward, we spend a lot of time on the grind. But I think looking back at some point is crucial, the more honestly you can look back and the more honestly you can express your past and make other people understand the power of your experiences, the



Jo Kelley smiles for a photo.

Courtesy of Portsmouth NH

more impactful your meditation will be. I think telling people this is how I've changed can inspire that change in others. I think one of the goals of meditation is to help other people learn the same lessons that you did and make their path a little bit easier and inspire them to look inwards on themselves too.

Q: Any shoutouts to really anyone who helped with the process or who made an impact on the meditation itself?

A: I definitely shout out to my parents because I know I talked a lot about them in there, they were a very important part of my life. Shout out to my friend

Mason. Going to Switzerland with him was definitely one of the best things I've ever done. Shout out to Ms. Flynn, my English teacher. She was the one who inspired me to do the two stories approach. That structure was something I needed for the meditation and she inspired that.

Op-Ed

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What is China Doing with Balloons?

By LEOZHANG '25

On Jan. 28, 2023, an unidentified flying object drifted over the southern tip of Alaska. Five days later, civilians in Montana looked up at a white, circular disc floating in the sky. Officials and politicians immediately condemned China after word came out that the unidentified object was a 'spy' balloon; China claimed it was simply gathering weather data. The U.S. military sent the aircraft F-22 Raptor to shoot down the balloon on Feb. 4 as it cruised above the Atlantic Ocean near the coast of South Carolina. Upon examining the fallen debris, officials confirmed that the balloon had surveillance technology equipped.

China's curiosity about the U.S. is nothing new, from spies (PBS Chicago) attending American universities to the social media giant TikTok stealing information (WIRED) from millions of Americans. China-

U.S. relations have deteriorated in recent years with trade wars, COVID-19, and races to grow their spheres of influence around the world. But days before Secretary of State Antony Blinken planned a visit to Beijing "to reinforce communication and cooperation (CNBC) between the two countries," China sent a balloon that increased distrust and hostility.

This bold move by the Chinese government reveals China's true intentions: President Xi Jinping is planning one final offensive to invade Taiwan.

When the Republic of China retreated to the island and claimed independence in 1949, every subsequent leader of the Chinese Communist Party vowed to "reunify" China again. Other than pride, conquering Taiwan would give China tangible advantages. With a U.S. ally right next door, China would love to see itself asserting its dominance as a superpower by

QUESTION OF THE ISSUE

What do you miss about Exeter over break, if anything?

When spending a break or an extended time away from campus, do you find yourself missing Exeter? What about it do you miss? The adrenaline of work? Hanging out with friends? The town? Or do you frankly just not miss it at all?

Submit your responses (short or long and may be anonymous) to exonian@gmail.com. Anyone is welcome to submit! Faculty and adult members of the community are equally as welcome to submit a response.

1. we could have some sort of a "cultural exchange day/week" where we spend a day at ehs and the ehs kids spends a day at pea! for some reason theres been some weird school animosity between the two, so i feel just understanding the other side would be really nice.

2. monthly workshop-esque days where we can explore and finally do the things we've always wanted to do but never had the time! this could be like a mental health improvement thing. i found that coming to exeter makes me realize that there are so many cool things that i can do, but the problem is we have zero time to try anything. i think that this one day of the month should be set aside just to try things, have the design lab, the sewing room, photography/cameras, art studio, robotics, etc. anything that we cant exactly start by ourselves on a normal weekend. idk, just something like this would be rly cool.

3. modification on check in, it could be like 6-8 study hours then 8-10 we get to go out of the dorms and hang out with our friends! (and like 11pm for upperclassmen maybe) i think that this would encourage everyone to not procrastinate and get our work done then be rewarded with social time!

— Enya Yu '26

removing enemy influence. Taiwan's location between the East and South China Sea would allow China to expand its military

near the Philippines and Japan. Economically, China could control 65% of all semiconductors and around 90% of all advanced chips (Voice of America) that Taiwan manufactures.

However, the window for an invasion is closing quickly. 1989 marked the beginning of the end of the CCP's control in China, as the world watched the Chinese military shoot unarmed protestors fighting for free speech and democracy. The booming economy of China and a high standard of living created unstoppable access to technology through phones and the Internet, which serve as a platform for freedom

of expression. When a protestor hung two banners and burned tires on the Sitong Bridge in Beijing in October, the government worked with Chinese social media to censor all dissent and coverage of the event. Officials never expected that demonstrators would use Apple's AirDrop feature to spread photos of the banners to people's phones in crowded public spaces.

The CCP is even reporting propaganda about the spy balloon, which according to their newspaper, People's Daily, was simply "designed for meteorological research purpose and made the unintended entry due to force majeure." Technology makes censorship and propaganda near to impossible. With access to all sorts of information, the Chinese people can deduce that the "weather" balloon was not a weather balloon.

President Xi is watching his control over the people begin to fade. He desperately needs data on the U.S., Taiwan's strongest ally, to plan his attack before time runs

out. But why wouldn't he use satellites to avoid detection? Well, a balloon has many advantages over satellites. They are much cheaper to build and maintain. Balloons would also not have to deal with atmospheric interference (Daily Kos) with radiation because of their low altitude. The Chinese government then could easily map (Forces) out of the balloon's route with modern weather forecasting and get accurate images of U.S. military bases and operations.

Even with spies and balloons feeding intel to the Chinese government, an invasion still seems improbable. President Joe Biden has stated that he would dispatch troops (Reuters) if China dared to invade Taiwan. President Xi could keep sending balloons, drones, or spies, and the U.S. will keep shooting them down. He will make his move soon, if at all. If he does, he would be risking an all-out war with the most powerful military in the world, which could escalate with the numerous allies of each country.



Ava Zhao / The Exonian via Midjourney

The Exonian

We would like to acknowledge the Squamscott/Penacook peoples who were the first peoples of this land. We would like to honor their ancestors, descendants and future generations for caring for this area and allowing us to be here today.

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Learning as a God

By FORREST ZENG '26

Disclaimer: The following Op-Ed is in the style of a Dialogue, a style that was often used by the Greek philosopher Plato. All quotes attributed to students in this piece are fictitious. They may not accurately reflect the opinions of the speakers.

Student 1: Ought we go to Weth or Elm?

Student 2: Elm is superior, there is no choice.

Student 1: That is incorrect, Weth has no competition.

Student 2: We seem to be at an impasse.

Student 1: Weth will be gone soon, we should spend time there for the sake of memory.

Student 2: Alright, for one day then.

The students wait in the Weth line.

Student 1: You mentioned earlier a discussion you participated in while in Agora. Was I not invited?

Student 2: No, it seemed, it started spontaneously. And I didn't participate myself, I heard only from our friend Tristan.

Student 1: Well, since it seems we have nothing to do except wait, it would be kind if you relayed what he said.

Student 2: Alright, but take this with a grain of salt—Tristan told me months ago, and I surely have forgotten much. But I remember the most important points, so I will try my best.

Student 1: Proceed.

Student 2: Well, I was returning from a writer's meeting for *The Exonian*, when I encountered Tristan on the path next to the music building, sipping what appeared to be a Coca-Cola. He was walking slowly, his eyes gazing at nothing in particular. When he saw me, I waved, and his absent face turned into something different. A strange look on his face, I couldn't quite discern from a distance. He rushed to me at a jog.

"You have to hear this. I was listening to an outrageous discussion on learning."

So I implored him to tell me, and it went like this:

He was sitting in the chairs in Agora when he heard a familiar commotion

at the Tan Lane doors. The doors swung open, and in walked Jinmin, Forrest, and Andrew. He knew these individuals to be both philosophers and Harkness warriors, but they had wildly different characteristics. He knew Forrest as a musician and a writer, Andrew to be a rationalist who seemed to be an unintentional populist, and Jinmin as the skeptic and existentialist of the three.

Student 1: And did he say what they were speaking of when they entered?

Student 2: He recalled them talking about some sort of veil. Tristan said to me that they switched topics quickly when they sat down. At this point, Tristan and I had walked across Front Street and had settled upon dining together at Elm. He tapped his head and said to me:

"After sitting down in a chair, Andrew asked them both, 'I have been meaning to ask you what you think of Harkness.'"

After a few moments, Jinmin replied, "For classes such as Math, it seems to me that we make discussions on the process of deriving the correct answer. There is no ambiguity in the answer,

"But what makes Harkness so optimal for learning? We have only come up with another perspective, one that is filtered and inclusive—yet there is nothing inherently different about the usefulness of the conclusion."

but only in the method of deriving. In classes such as English, there is ambiguity in the art, which we must discuss. It seems then that Harkness intends to resolve ambiguity and to come to a compromise of sorts."

Andrew responded, "But what makes Harkness so optimal for learning? We have only come up with another perspective, one that is filtered and inclusive—yet there is nothing inherently different about the usefulness of the conclusion."

"What do you believe learning to be? And what do you believe understanding to be?" asked Forrest.

Andrew fidgeted for a second, and responded, "Learning, I think, must be a sort of internalization. Perhaps simply knowing

the facets of a piece of information or an opinion. Understanding, I suppose, is the knowledge of what this information means and how it might be applied."

Forrest said, "Well, let me inquire then: do you think that we use what we learn as adults to live?"

"Certainly," Andrew responded.

"And must we also have the understanding to use what we have learned?"

"Absolutely, they must come together."

"So then our schooling will grow our understanding and our knowledge, the aggregation of things that were learned, in our jobs and lives as adults," Forrest said.

"Yes."

"As adults, we are motivated to support ourselves and our families. You and I must agree then that we support ourselves and our families by interacting with others appropriately. Let me phrase it this way: we are both proponents of social contract theory. That is, we as humans, decided to form a contract of sorts with other humans, where we decided that we would keep the peace, as would other humans. And in this way, as adults, we will follow this social contract, and interact with others by the laws of this contract?"

"Yes, you and I both agree upon this."

"So to what ends will we settle the details of this contract?"

"The needs and health of the people, by some government."

"Surely the needs and health of the people are determined by their surroundings and backgrounds? And that these backgrounds are different and diverse. So when we determine the laws of this contract, we must take into consideration the needs of these diverse, different people. And education and learning form the basis of our choices. So then, while learning, we must consider the needs of all people and opinions of all people. And Harkness, the diversity of opinions and absorbing of perspectives, is beneficial towards our lives and others."

At this point, Nathi interrupted. Before this, I had seen Nathi enter the room. He stood there for a second, searching the chairs, and finding Andrew, had headed towards him. He said, "I am sorry to interrupt, but

I was listening and I could not help but jump in. I will say to your open arms that I agree with Andrew, and with his definition, it would be a waste, then, to teach children what is useless in their lives. For, we all agree that we learn to prepare for our lives as adults, which involves working in specialized positions. Then, there is no purpose to learn math if we choose to be a writer, nor to learn U.S. History if we are to be a musician. You might argue that all sciences and arts are intertwined, to which I respond that there is no need to learn them if we can easily access them with a simple search on the internet. We cannot find any justification in the process of learning and understanding subjects outside our specializations. I challenge you to refute that." He sat down with a grin.

Jinmin said, "I admire your dedication towards ensuring the objects of our actions are to be applied thus. Let us explore this topic further, in an attempt to define the importance of learning for our own skill, and whether we ought to learn and understand as much as we may."

"Try, but you might fail," Nathi replied.

"Thank you. We have established that we use what we learn and what we understand in our lives as adults."

"Yes, that is what is universal."

"What do we face as adults?"

"We will face whatever is the subject of our specialization."

"Can we always predict that we will face in our specialization?"

"Not always, but confidently for most. In the ones that require a wider range of subjects to learn, it seems that they require things that might need improvisation of sorts."

"What are some examples?"

"A soldier, perhaps, as he must be able to react appropriately on the battlefield. Or perhaps a leader, who must be able to process what he receives."

"And these jobs require a great amount of skill, and are thus laudable, to which we should strive. So if we are to try and achieve skill through education, then we should also understand situations and what their implications are without having to learn every single possibility. In other words, we must have decision-making skills."

It took Nathi some time

to think before he reluctantly conceded.

"How do we extrapolate our understanding then?"

"It seems that it is impossible to do so for all subjects, for we cannot learn everything."

"But certainly, just as a musician practices to be able to play any piece on sight, or that a doctor practices on hundreds of patients to be able to recognize any illness on sight, we can train our minds on understanding information until we can understand any new information that might face us. We should therefore try our best to learn and understand as much as we can."

"I suppose. Then it seems that my thought did not

"Just as a musician practices to be able to play any piece on sight, we can train our minds on understanding information until we can understand any new information that might face us."

consider this necessity."

The discussion had gone on for a fair amount of time, and I decided to jump in.

I said to Jinmin, "Your perspective on this subject is very much supportable—but you have left out a topic that we have yet to hear about. You have not told us why it should be good to practice learning and understanding opinions."

Jinmin responded, "Well, hasn't Forrest demonstrated that we ought to absorb opinions?"

I replied, "Forrest has demonstrated why we ought to absorb opinions and information for the better of society, at least, a diverse society with a social contract. However, we have not seen why learning and understanding a diverse number of opinions is good for our own skills. We understand now why, in order to be skillful, we should learn as much information as we can, but as of now, I do not think anyone has shown why we should do the same with opinions."

"In fact, I was hoping to address that but was not sure whether anyone would bring it up" Jinmin added. He turned to look at me. "I would suppose, Tristan, that we would make a similar argument."

I replied, "Well, demonstrate to us."

"Do you think it to be true that being skillful includes being able to support one's own opinion?"

"Yes."

"Then, of course, one's own opinion must be supported with arguments and refutations."

"Certainly. To know how to do that is part of being skillful."

"If we hear at Exeter only opinions congruent to ours, we have no need to support our opinions, and so we don't need to know how to. So in this sense, we must face a conflict of sorts in order to know how to defend our opinions. Even if our opinions are destroyed and changed, do we understand how our opinions interact with other opinions?"

"Yes, it has given us experience."

"Just as we desire to practice our processing of information. We also desire to practice our ability to perceive, defend, and process opinions. It is difficult to argue for an opinion that is not your own. But difficulty often leads to growth. And we are at school to face difficulty. So if we also decide to implant ourselves in the shoes of the opinions we are not familiar with or disagree with, we will face difficulty, but also grow in our understanding of how opinions interact with each other. And thus, we have seen why we ought to understand as many opinions as we may, just as we ought to understand as much information as we can."

"Agreed."

"To do this, is there a better way than to converse with others about their opinions? And to be respectful of their perspectives for the sake of intellectual humility?"

"You have described Harkness, it seems."

"That is my intention. Striving for this ability to extrapolate our understanding is like looking upon any information and any opinion as a god—that is, to have a sort of god-sight over the interactions between opinions and the processing of information."

"We ought to do just this."

This is the entirety of the discussion which Tristan told me.

Student 1: A fascinating discourse. Let us enjoy our lunch knowing these things.



Ava Zhao / *The Exonian*
via Midjourney

Ranking of The Beatles' Albums

By AVEEN BURNEY '25

Though I'm no expert, I have listened to every song on every one of these albums, so trust me. Each of these albums have songs that will be sung for the rest of time, so this has not been an easy task. Without The Beatles, music would not be where it is today. Call me old fashioned, call me a granny, call me crazy, but they really started it all. Their influence on pop and rock music shifted the course of history. Most people only know the overplayed, but still amazing, Beatles songs, but I think that there is more to them than just peace and love. If you want a place to start, this ranking helps with that.

13. With The Beatles - 1963

The very iconic album cover does not make up for the amount of musical covers on here. And while the covers are great, you can just feel their own craft bubbling to the surface. Best song on here is definitely "All My Loving."

12. A Hard Day's Night - 1964

The album title is a malapropism said by Ringo, how fitting. Solid album and an even better movie to go along with it. This album has some great songs like "And I Love Her" and "Can't Buy Me Love."

11. Beatles For Sale - 1964

The songs on this album really hit me differently than any of the others. The pun on colors used in "Baby's In Black" just blew my little prep mind. Their covers on this album just feel more raw and real, especially "Rock and Roll Music" and the iconic Buddy Holly song "Words of Love." I really love most of the songs on the album, but a special shoutout to "Eight Days A Week" solely due to the pain it has brought Lionel.

10. Please Please Me - 1963

Ah, this album. It was their first official album, and man they hit it out of the park. Songs like "I Saw Her Standing There" or "Love Me Do" are what established themselves as different from their peers. And no one can forget their iconic cover of "Twist and Shout." Very iconic album cover as well.



9. Yellow Submarine - 1969

First five songs are great, but George Martin should have put out his own album.



8. Help! - 1965

What an album. You can start to feel the shift, the desire to do whatever it is they want, Bob Dylan's weed kicking in. I was in love with the songs "I've Just Seen A Face," "Ticket To Ride," and "Act Naturally" (proud mom moment for Ringo). But everyone knows the best song on the album: "Yesterday."



7. The Beatles (The White Album) - 1968

This was originally higher than "Rubber Soul," but its length and random nature is why it's lower. They wrote these songs during and after their famous trip to India to find themselves. During all the chaos and vibrant colors of the time, that they themselves instilled, they chose plain white. Simplicity is often the ultimate sophistication. "Blackbird" is amazing, but "Revolution 9" is just too much for me.



6. Rubber Soul - 1965

They have shifted. They have been influenced. The great change has started and they are heading towards their golden years. This is a great album, very funky and fresh and different. George Harrison's sitar on "Norwegian Wood," the angelic harmonies on "Nowhere Man," the sadness of "In My Life," I could go on and on about every single one of these songs. These are just to name a few.



5. Magical Mystery Tour - 1967

Shout out to Freya for being the "Egg Man." This album is basically perfect, every single one of the songs are amazing so I am not even going to go through it.

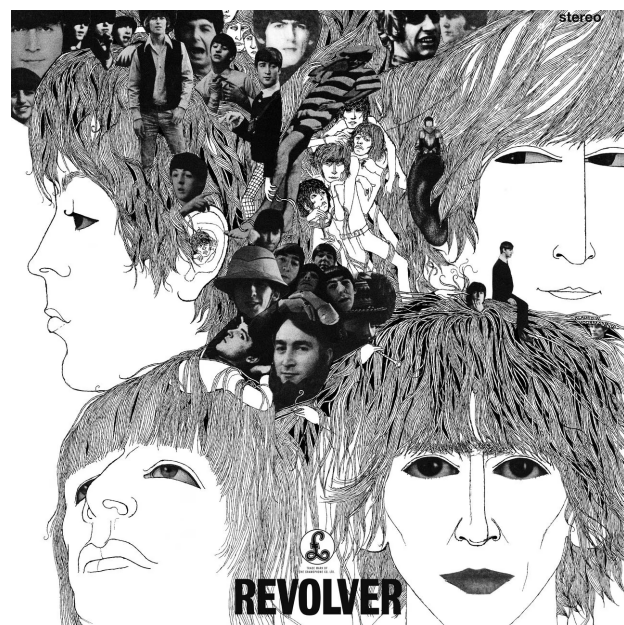


4. Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band - 1967

This was their concept album. The last song on the album may just be one of the best songs of all time. I really have no words for this. Everyone should listen to this album at least once in their life. You will not regret it.

3. Revolver - 1966

What an album, also perfect. Some say it is their best album, but I am just biased because of the *Get Back* documentary. Every song is incredible, the tone, experimentation, psychedelic influences, and overall vibes are immaculate and cannot be matched. A must-listen for any music fan.



2. Let It Be - 1970

Where do I start?



1. Abbey Road - 1969

Out of every album, this is the one you need to listen to, or else you just hate music. Don't stop, listen to it the whole way through. It is provoking, it is so different, every song just melts into the next one in one big medley. Where do I end?

Humor

The Crossword Corner By Finn Tronnes '24

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15					16			
17						18					19			
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51	52	53			54	55	56				57	58	59	60
61					62					63				
64					65					66				
67					68					69				

ACROSS

- 1 Use as an ingredient
- 6 Org. concerned with human rights
- 10 Starting from
- 14 Goopy campfire treat
- 15 Trios, missing one
- 16 Pleasant
- 17 Variety of nuggets(meatless D-Hall option)
- 19 “_____ chance!”
- 20 Yearbook
- 21 Opposite of very happy
- 22 ___ about (approximately)
- 23 Red planet
- 25 What many do at this point in the term

- 26 Deli meat
- 29 Our school
- 31 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12...
- 35 Solo
- 36 Cathedral that burned in
- 38 Word of denial
- 39 Lizzo’s first name
- 41 Middle name placeholder in govt. records
- 42 Underground insect group with a queen
- 44 Record shop stock
- 46 Used to grow bacteria on in bio labs
- 47 Energy Web Token abbr.
- 48 Lap again, on the track
- 49 Monster’s _____ (2001

- movie)
- 50 Deep nasty cut
- 51 Custardy dessert
- 54 Rapper _____ Shakur
- 57 Walkie-talkie word: done
- 61 Suffix with weak- or earth
- 62 Urban alias
- 64 Cleveland’s lake
- 65 Showy peacock feature
- 66 Scooby Doo character with glasses
- 67 Military force
- 68 What mediators let out
- 69 Plant _____: start something

- DOWN**
- 1 Take _____: drink slowly
 - 2 “Let’s talk privately,” on social media
 - 3 L- _____ (potent drug)
 - 4 Tony Stark’s alter ego
 - 5 Nintendo’s Super _____
 - 6 Spanish farewell
 - 7 Chicago team
 - 8 1970 hit by the Kinks
 - 9 Vehicles with significant mileage
 - 10 Peeved
 - 11 Priory of _____ (group in “The Da Vinci Code”)
 - 12 Eight: Prefix
 - 13 Phobia
 - 18 Drug like Zolofit and

- Prozac
- 24 “Take _____” (office request)
- 26 Capital of Yemen
- 27 Beside
- 28 Led Zepelin’s “Whole _____ Love”
- 29 Show the way
- 30 Crafts website
- 32 “Wheel of Fortune” co-host White
- 33 What Breaking Bad won 16 of
- 34 Simon, Armstrong, Varwandkar, and others
- 36 Sweet _____:drink sweetener
- 37 Roof overhangs
- 40 Puts in, as a political office

- 43 Likely to cause second-hand embarrassment
- 45 Alternatives to androids
- 48 Track event
- 50 Irish speakers
- 51 Dog biter
- 52 Line to Penn Sta.
- 53 Lively, in music: Abbr.
- 55 Great Salt Lake state
- 56 _____ and proper
- 58 Lowland
- 59 Plus-size model with a palindromic name
- 60 Enjoy a book
- 63 FDR power project

Sports

» STEP

Read about the step dance teams, OutKast and Precision, 6.

» SQUASH

Read about how the girls varsity squash team dominated at St. Marks, 6.

Dance Spotlight: OutKast and Precision

By TEDDY CAPOZZI and ERIN HAN

OutKast and Precision, the two step dance teams on campus, never fail to put on electrifying, captivating performances, whether at E/A pep rallies, end-of-term dance showcases, or this year's Black History Month assembly.

Behind these performances are hours of rehearsal as a team. "We spend two hours every week on Sundays stepping," Precision co-head Eliana Hall said. "It does sound like a very long time, but that time goes by really fast when you're around people who enjoy it [and] are having fun."

Upper and Precision co-head Solei Silva-Carin also talked about why she enjoys stepping. "I really enjoy the group, everyone is super sweet. The act of learning steps is also super cool because it takes a lot of effort to synchronize our movements and to learn steps in general. Everyone is a pretty fast learner, which is nice." Silva-Carin also touched on why she decided to become co-head of the club. "I wanted to learn how to make my own steps and to take on a larger role in the group. I also wanted to add my own style to Precision and work with other people to



OutKast members pose on the stairs in front of Phillips Hall.

Joy Chi / The Exonian

continue to bring more flare to our steps," she said.

The two groups often collaborate; for example, when they performed at the Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Day keynote. Recently, they took part in a spontaneous dance-off performance skit for the Black History Month Assembly. "One of the OutKast co-heads reached out, saying we're planning on doing a video for the Black History Month assembly [and] we would have to do some sort of battle, like

answering a question first and then turning [it] into some sort of argument between the two groups," Hall said.

"So we went along with the process," Hall continued. "I think OutKast really had the vision for it, and we added on to it with our own kind of creativity."

Members of both groups expressed a lot of love for their clubs. Prep Kyle Kennedy's, a member of OutKast, said, "My favorite part [of rehearsals] is when we finally get a step program correct. Then we can finally get it on

beat and everything works well together. It just sounds so nice and it's just really pleasing to be a part of that."

Kennedy's also spoke about his discovery of step since joining the group this year. "Before Exeter, I hadn't really known what step was, but now that I've come here, I've really found an interest in it. I'd never been a part of any dance teams beforehand, so step was very new to me, but it's probably one of the most fun things I'm able to do now. I didn't really know much about it before, but I'm glad I

joined the team."

Prep Collin Moore, also a new member of OutKast, commented on his relationship with step. "Step and dance have always been a part of my life. Stepping is deeply rooted in African American culture. For me, to be able to continue that art form has been important."

"It's also a way for me to express myself in a fun and creative atmosphere," Moore continued. "Step is not like traditional dance. It's different. It's fun. It's flashy."

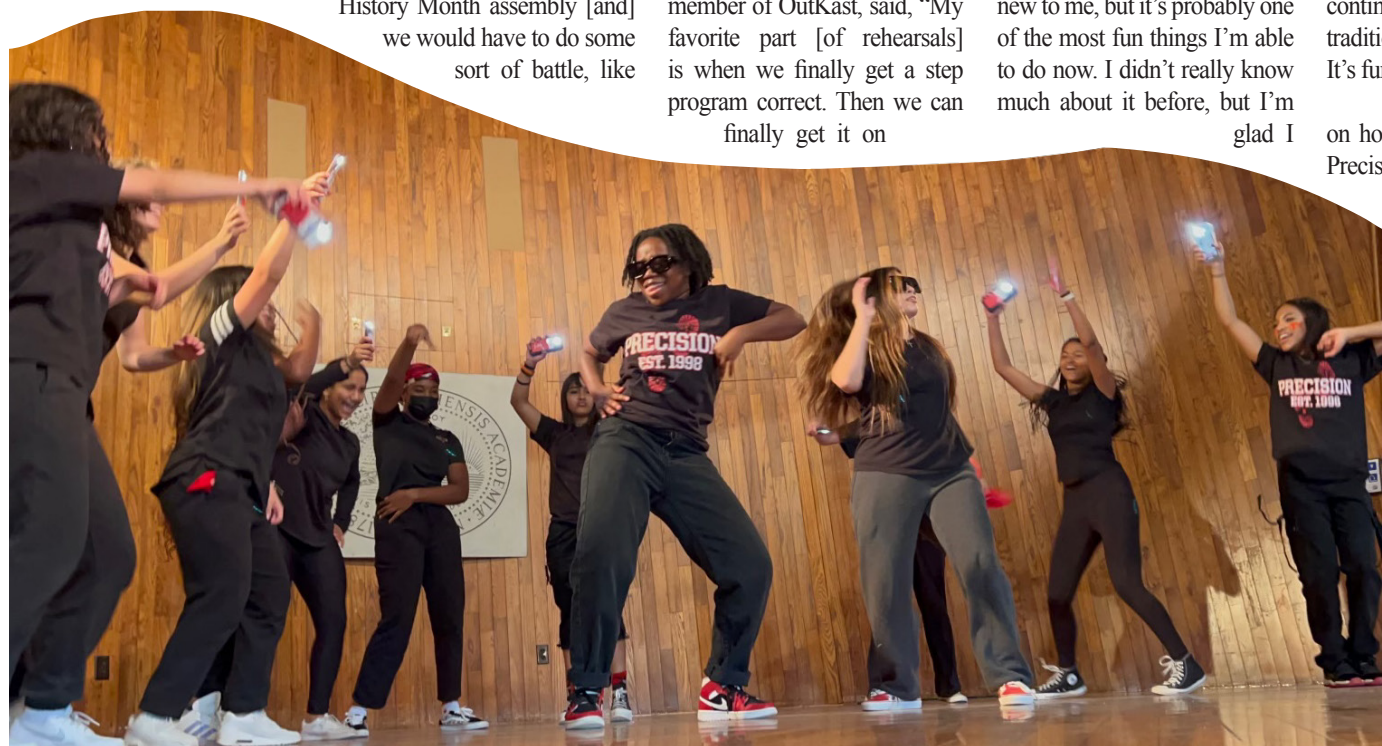
Moore commented on how much of OutKast and Precision's recent success can be attributed to the community they've built. "Something about OutKast I love is the brotherhood. It's not a huge club, it's not a huge team. That gives us the opportunity to grow strong relationships with each other."

During prep year, senior and current co-head Reggie Harris was anxious to perform but quickly saw how bright the prospective future was for OutKast. "When

I initially tried out prep year, I was scared I was going to embarrass myself. So I decided to opt out, but after I saw them perform at the pep rally with just three people I realized OutKast wasn't just about dancing, it was about building community and paying homage to our culture, concepts that transcend any stage fright I might have had."

Outkast co-head Riches Afolabi has been manifesting this culture since joining the group as a new prep and becoming a co-head the following year. "Many people don't know this, but in my lower year, when I became co-head of OutKast, we had only three members," Afolabi said.

As Afolabi recruited more members during his upper fall, he saw the group blossom and grow to its full potential. By the spring term, OutKast accrued ten members and was able to perform at the spring dance showcase. "We practiced tirelessly and put on a show-stopping performance," Afolabi said. "It's only been up since that showcase. My favorite part about OutKast is that it is more than a club. OutKast is a brotherhood."



Precision members perform at assembly.

Solei Silva-Carin / The Exonian

Girls Varsity Squash Dominates St. Marks

By SAM ALDERMANN, JACOB CREELAN, and HARRY WALKER

On Feb. 8, the girls' squash team traveled to St. Mark's School and came away with a dominant 7-0 win. Despite some recent struggles, the team rebounded with a statement victory. Sweeping their matches, they improved to a 3-6 record for the season.

Prep Tiffany Sun reflected on the match. "The season has been good, many of our opponents so far have been very strong schools, and even so we have put up a good fight against them."

Upper Lucy Lukens added, "We have had some tough matches this season, so I think it was really great for the team to take this win before interscholastics and nationals."

Overall, the girls' squash team has had a rocky season with many ups and downs, however, team morale has remained high. The win against St. Mark's was coming off a tough loss to Milton Academy. However, they bounced back with this win.

Sun said, "We played well and really demonstrated improvement. Coming away with such an outstanding win greatly improved the team's morale." The match was a much-needed boost, with the

New England Championships looming ahead.

Coach Mercy Carbonell commented on senior and co-captain Grace Puchalski's especially exciting match, which ended with a triumphant victory for the team. "Grace played an opponent who was feisty, who ran for everything, who was unpredictable. Grace lived into her reputation and her name: she was calm and figured out that all she needed to do was to work within the basic principles of the game."

Leading up to the New England Championships, the team is eager to succeed. "From the beginning of the season, we've all improved so much. Everyone is really excited for the championship and we are all rooting for our teammates there," lower ShaoShao Tang said.

Carbonell also expressed her admiration for how hard the team has been working to improve. "They show up every day to work hard, to offer their enthusiasm for practice drills, to change their game, and to support those around them."

Lukens added a new perspective. "New England is always an exciting tournament, but between some injuries and absent players, I think we are more optimistic about Nationals the following weekend."

Throughout the season,

the team has stayed very supportive of each other and really bonded throughout the year. "When we have games away or at home, there's usually a couple of people still playing. Everyone will come to watch them play. It's very supportive and everyone cheers them on," Tang said.

As the season comes to a close, many players are grateful to have shared so many great memories with their teammates throughout the course of the year. "One very fun memory from the season was having fun on the sometimes long bus rides back from away games," Sun explained.

Tang talked about how the players have also enjoyed each other's support throughout the year. "We had our last home game over the weekend and one of the seniors was playing a game. It was a very intense game and it was the last round and everyone went and cheered her on. It was a very cool moment."

Lukens highlighted some remarkable moments from the season. "I think our most memorable matches were those with the whole team because it is really great to see our full ladder on the court. Some other favorite activities were two truths and a lie and our speed-walking race."

E A Scores

Basketball Girls V - L 42-39

Basketball Boys V - W 56-55

Hockey Boys V - L 2-0

Hockey Girls V - L 4-0

Swimming & Diving Girls V - T 93-93

Swimming & Diving Boys V - L 118-68

Squash Girls V - L 7-0

Squash Boys V - L 7-0

Track Girls V/JV - L 62-47

Track Boys V/JV - W 75.33-33.66

Wrestling V (earlier in the season) - L 42-39

Basketball Girls JV - W 33-24

Basketball Boys JV - W 73-47

Hockey Boys JV - L 4-3

Hockey Girls JV - W 6-1

Swimming & Diving Girls JV - L 96-79

Swimming & Diving Boys JV - L 96-81

Squash Girls JV - W 7-0

Squash Boys JV - L 5-2