

## NEWS

Read about “Speak About It,” the travelling theatre group promoting consent and sexual education, and their visit to Exeter, 1.

## LIFE

Read about Kodi Suzuki Lopez '23's experiences with campus advocacy, 4.

## OP-ED

Read Sophie Ma '24's perspective on motherhood and the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, 8.

Phillips Exeter Academy  
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# The Exonian

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## Students Move In, Engage with Orientation



Student leaders for E<sup>3</sup> gather in front of Academy Building steps, ready to lead.

*Courtesy of Christian Harrison*

By JOONYOUNG HEO, LUCY JUNG, ANNA KIM, NHAN PHAN, and CATHERINE WU

The Exeter student body, new and returning alike, arrived on campus in the first weeks of September to a bustling period of move-in and orientation.

On Sept. 4, the first wave of new students set foot on campus, engaged in either the International Student Orientation Program (ISO) or the Equitable Exeter Experience (E<sup>3</sup>). Over the course of three days, they took part in activities that were designed to help them acclimate to campus life, explore aspects of their social identity, have fun with their new friends, and introduce the Academy's core values of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice.

A day after the orientation programs concluded, the rest of the student body arrived on Sept. 7. Student Leaders who were on campus a week prior and faculty were present to help new and returning students move into the dorms. Following

a series of class-based orientation activities, sports, music, and dance tryouts, an Opening Assembly featuring the new addition of an International Flag Procession officially opened the new school year. Students and faculty members expressed their thoughts on orientation programs, move-in day, and hopes for the year ahead.

New international students had the option to sign up for a three-day orientation program to help them transition to Exeter. Students were grouped with older students and met new friends through a variety of activities. “The main purpose of ISO is to help international students have more time to adjust, and this adjustment is in many areas: jetlag, culture shock, and learning about the Academy,” International Student Coordinator Jennifer Smith explained. “It’s a robust program and a lot of work, but it’s the best way to start a new academic year!”

Chinese instructor and ISO faculty Ning Zhou shared a similar sentiment. “It’s a great opportunity for the new

international students to join together,” he said. “I think this is also a great friendship for them to form. During the ISO, we had a lot of discussions with parents and students on how to adjust to the school and how to get to know the campus and its resources. I’m also very grateful to the ISO leaders for coming to school a little early and helping these students and building relationships with them.”

Senior and ISO Leader Sofia Coelho said, “We had some new additions to the program, including more DEI work, which I think is very important when you’re traveling, not only across the country or across the world, but also culturally. We had some explanations about different customs that you should follow and what to do in potentially uncomfortable situations that you might face as an international student. We had some very deep talks about fitting in and our names, but that was intertwined with lots of fun conversations and activities that I thought really added to the program.”

The program encountered some challenges. “We did have some factors that were out of our control, such as drenching rain for the first time in weeks,” Smith said. “I was disappointed that we were not able to close the program with our traditional picnic by the ocean. We instead closed it with a Target run.”

Senior and ISO Leader Joy Chi added, “I think I would definitely appreciate ISO being extended a little bit, so it feels like there’s time to actually get to know people and not feel stressed about missing something because you’re tired and need your sleep.”

New lower and ISO participant Alyssa Villanueva agreed. “Maybe make ISO a day longer, with either a free day or the activities spread out a little more. I feel like we barely had time to get settled.”

Despite a few hurdles, the participants largely enjoyed the program. “Meeting other international students helped me relate to people so I felt way more comfortable

MOVE-IN, 2

## “Speak About It” Visits Campus

By ASHLEY JIANG, ANNA KIM, CALISTA LEE, and EMI LEVINE

On Monday, Sep. 19, upperclassmen attended a play about consent and sexual education titled “Speak About It” performed by a traveling theatre group of five actors. The actors shared firsthand accounts from high-school and college students around the world to explore diverse experiences of healthy and unhealthy relationships, identity, and sexuality.

“Speak About It,” sponsored by Exonians Against Sexual Assault (EASA), encourages sex positivity and open conversations about the subject through short skits. Upperclassmen participated in brief discussion groups following

the play, which were facilitated by volunteer student leaders, to unpack what they had just watched and share opinions. The goal, senior Sophia Green said, was “to remind students that though conversations around topics of sex, intimacy, etcetera can feel uncomfortable, they are important conversations to have nonetheless.”

Upper and EASA co-head Nupur Malhotra led the event and was involved in a large part of the planning. “Dr. Palmer and EASA started working together last year, and Dr. Palmer brings a lot of the events to campus like boundary training and consent workshops,” Malhotra said, explaining how they decided to bring the group to campus. “We had talked

SPEAK ABOUT IT, 3

## Exonians Lead Club Expo

By AVA HELBIG, EMILIA KNIESTEDT, DUSHANT LOHANO, and SOPHIE MA

The first few weeks of school saw a flurry of activities, from music auditions to sports tryouts to Club Expo on Sept. 24. With more than 150 student-run clubs, 60 interscholastic teams representing 23 different sports, as well as a plethora of private music lessons and ensemble offerings, students at the Academy have the opportunity to pursue a wide variety of interests.

“One of the special things about the Academy is that there are a million different activities to do,” Assistant Director of Student Activities Kelly McGahie said. “There are some clubs that are silly, there are some that are very serious, and there’s everything in between. Of course, there are all kinds of other programs on campus as well. There are your

classes, there are events happening in dorms, there are student activities, et cetera.”

This year, Student Activities renamed Club Night to Club Expo to better reflect the nature of the event. McGahie explained that in previous years, Club Night would typically be held in the afternoon, creating an ironic contradiction; additionally, the masses of club co-heads managing tables, handing out candy, and fervently advertising their clubs made the event resemble more of an expo.

Although there are a large variety of club options to choose from, students usually wind up finding the few that speak to their interests the most. For example, senior Krish Patel, co-head of Biology Club, spends his spare time performing labs and listening to guest STEM speakers. “Biology Club is my favorite club on campus,” Patel shared.

ACTIVITIES, 3

## Academy Overenrollment Places Pressure on Housing

By LILIA FECKTEAU, SELIM KIM, AMY LIN, ANDREW YUAN, and LEO ZHANG

In the wake of the current 2022-2023 school year, students have reported an increase in emergency doubles and triples within dormitories. This issue is particularly felt amongst those in female dorms, notably Dunbar, Amen, and Wheelwright. Many students speculate that the cause for the sudden increase may be a result of over-enrollment.

Dean of Enrollment William Leahy reported that the Academy received 222 preps, 62 lowers, 25 uppers, and 31 Seniors and Post-Graduates, combining for a total of 340 new students. Though Leahy has stated that the total enrollment rate is relatively consistent with previous years,

he admits that the student body is over-enrolled by 7 students, 1 being boarding and 6 being day.

Leahy explained that the renovation of Merrill and Langdell Hall played a role in over-enrollment. As the two dorms were taken offline, Leahy said, “we increased the number of enrolled day students and reduced the number of boarding students to help alleviate some of the temporary pressure on housing.”

“The admission office annually reviews its enrollment modeling to account for changes in historical trends and meets with the Dean of Students office before finalizing our enrollment targets,” he continued.

Despite the small numbers of over-enrollment, many new students have still found themselves placed in makeshift doubles and triples. To some,

residing in such spaces has been an unexpected adjustment.

For prep Maya Ilango, who lives in an emergency double in Amen Hall, the experience has been both “good and bad.” Illango explained, “We have to share a closet, which isn’t too bad since it’s a walk-in closet, but sometimes it gets a little bit cramped.”

Prep Amelia Post, who currently resides in an emergency triple in Wheelwright, noted that getting a triple was a bit of a surprise. “On the dorm request form, I remember saying that I’d love a roommate, but a triple is just probably not something I would like,” Post said. But she still approached the arrangement with a positive mindset, convincing herself that “this is gonna be an experience.” Afterwards,

Post reflected, “it’s honestly been great because both my roommates are incredible...I’m actually pretty glad I got a triple.”

In fact, like Post, many students have expressed that the emergency doubles and triples actually feel quite accommodating. Prep Victoria Vanderslice, who is in an emergency double in Dunbar, is another one of those students. “I feel like for a freshman, it’s a really great room... Most seniors and uppers that I know were in that room all had a great experience. So for a smaller room in that dorm, I think it’s a great size,” Vanderslice said.

She continued, “What I think is great about my room is that it’s very distinct about which person has which side. My dresser’s on my side, my desk is on my side, my bed is on my side, and it’s easy

to have a separation. I don’t feel like I’m necessarily sharing my personal space with someone else. So, it’s very easy to have our own boundaries.”

However, one’s experience in an emergency double or triple may differ by dorm. Vanderslice noted that it is also based on an element of luck. “I do know a lot of people that live in three-person rooms and they add a lot more space. But, maybe another person is really cramped. So I do think it is really luck,” Vanderslice said.

Senior and Gould House proctor Alysha Lai mentioned, “I was also told that we have enrolled more girls in these recent years so girls’ dorms have been more full.” “We have a double in Gould House which has been an emergency triple these last 2 years,” she added.

Lai thinks “[The modification] might be because New Hall is not accepting preps this year.”

Though there has indeed been an increase in the number of emergency doubles and triples this school year, many students note that it is not a major issue. Prep Tiffany Sun, residing in an emergency triple in McConnell Hall stated, “my roommates and I have agreed to rotate between the rooms, each person would get the single for one term...[and] we share a private bathroom, which worked out pretty well with just us three.” Sun concluded, “I’m sure that for us, at least, we were able to and will be able to troubleshoot through most of the issues.”

## » MOVE-IN

Read about the second year of Equitable Exeter Experience (E<sup>3</sup>) programming, 1.

## » ACTIVITIES

Read student recommendations on clubs and other fun, communal spaces on and off campus, 1.

## » OVERENROLLMENT

Read about effects of overenrollment on Gould House, 1.

## Move-In Day Cont.



Student leaders for E<sup>3</sup> and ISO at the Fun Center.

*Courtesy of Kerrie Tinsley-Stribling*

here for the first couple days,” prep Rebecca Nguyen said. “We went to the Arcade, we did some community-building activities, had a pizza dinner, a bonfire, a Target run, stuff like that.”

Prep Andy Song also enjoyed most of the ISO activities, despite struggling with jetlag on the first day. “We did a lot of group activities like scavenger hunting that helped to get to know people. My favorite was going to the Hilltop fun center.”

“The icebreakers were probably my favorite part of the program,” new lower Tejas West said. “ISO was really special because there were people from all over the world. I think I met about a hundred people in those three days.”

New lower Evie Gaylord agreed, “I liked the activities when we were in groups because it meant you got to meet loads of people, rather than just sticking with the person you met first. It was a really good way to move into the community.”

Lower and ISO leader Hemani Stallard said, “ISO helps make them feel more at home in their surroundings and with a situation that they’re not so familiar with, like an American school.”

Smith agreed. “It’s also normal for students to feel a bit unsure or anxious about such a new place, so far from home,” she said. “We always say that the relationship does not end with ISO and I am hopeful students will seek out their leaders and OMA for support in the coming year.”

E<sup>3</sup> was the second orientation program and the newest implemented by the Academy. “E<sup>3</sup> is a pre-orientation program for new students of color, low income students, and students who identify as LGBTQ+ that shows them the resources that they need in the school,” upper and E<sup>3</sup> Mentor Advay Nomula said. “It just gives them the headstart that they need just to get started on campus. A boarding school like Exeter, even if you’re a day student, is a completely

different environment!”

E<sup>3</sup> Faculty and Director of Equity and Inclusion Stephanie Bramlett provided some thoughts on how the program unfolded: “This was the second year of the program in its current iteration. We grew from about 50 new students last year to 81 new Exonians this year. Our mentor team and faculty are amazing! They are really the backbone of the whole E<sup>3</sup> experience.”

As with ISO, the E<sup>3</sup> program also had its difficulties. “A large part of the E<sup>3</sup> program revolves around identity,” lower and E<sup>3</sup> Mentor Maemi Carrillo said. “I think for students who aren’t used to talking so much about their background, it can be difficult and overwhelming. This year, however, I think the program was able to deal with more serious topics in a lighter way.”

Bramlett added, “Time is always the challenge at PEA. We strived to strike a good balance between a meaningful program where students get connected with campus resources and each other and not being too overwhelming and overscheduled. I think we did it.”

Other mentors took inspiration from their own past experiences in orientation. “I actually took part in the E<sup>3</sup> program last year as a mentee,” upper and E<sup>3</sup> mentor Alexander Luna said. “This year training was on Saturday and Sunday before the new mentees arrived. Then we basically spent the next three days getting them adjusted. We did an event where we recreated some of the affinity spaces on campus and allowed the mentees to come in if they felt comfortable. It was a great experience to get closer with the mentees and give them a good head start, as I did last year.”

Many upperclassmen shared their experiences as proctors or student listeners, two notable positions of leadership within their dormitories. “I’m really happy that I can give back to the community as a proctor,” Senior and Amen Dorm Proctor

Cindy Su said. “I’ve met some of the new students and they’re all super sweet and I’m really excited that they are finding a community within our dorm.”

“As a prep, I was overwhelmed at the start of school with the new environment, and I didn’t know who to turn to. But now as a senior, I want to be there for new students and help them out in any way I can,” senior Krish Patel said.

Senior and Peabody Dorm Proctor Charlie Edwards agreed. “In my first year, my dorm’s proctors were integral to my Exeter adjustment. On my first day, I was greeted by an older-looking student, who, before even asking my name, immediately offered to help with my luggage. His name was Jon Bradbury. In hindsight, being in a completely new place, disoriented and scared, to be welcomed with open arms by such a proctor immediately made me feel at home.”

Edwards highlighted how his prep year proctors still stuck with him to this day. “Jon Bradbury, Ervin Williams, Alex Urquhart, Josh Ridick, Kyle Marshall. I’ll never forget these names, as they shaped my Exeter and Peabody-Hall experience into something special.”

“I’m an upperclassman now and I’m also a student leader,” Nomula, also a day student proctor for Webster Hall said. “It feels kind of weird, but I do have a role on campus now. So I have to be a good role model, and I’m excited for what’s to come. I introduced myself on move-in day, and we were just all chilling on the Webster front lawn talking, having a good time, and eating some donuts. Later I toured the new day-student affiliates.”

Student listeners found that they shared a similar sense of leadership on campus. “The purpose of student listening is to be a good resource for students and to provide them with whatever help they may need,” upper and student listener

William Newby said.

“The program is meant to support other students’ mental and emotional wellbeing,” senior Dan Han said. “I think our program went well. We did an adequate job, and they picked a number of students who are well suited to support their peers’ emotional and mental wellbeing.”

“It’s right there in the name,” Luna said. “We’re there to listen. If any students come in wanting to chat, or if they’re struggling with some homework or their daily lives, we’re there for them. If they need someone else, we connect them with the right people. We’re just there to be friendly.”

Despite some challenges, many student listeners have already found a rhythm in their role. “I’m the only student listener in Abbot, so I thought it might be a stretch,” upper Ayaan Akhtar said. “But it’s a smaller dorm in general, and a smaller day student population of ten or so. It hasn’t been too bad because there aren’t so many people to look over. And I did my training with the proctors, so I had a support team with me through the process.”

Some had challenges of their own in New Hall. “We don’t have too many new kids in the dorm,” senior Montana Dickerson said. “At this point, it’s mostly been about bridging the gap between Merrill and Langdell and trying to make one cohesive community. But it’s been easier than I thought—for one thing, we have the experience of being kicked out of our dorms in common. The dorm itself is fine. The elevator’s not functional and I had to carry my boxes to the third floor, but not awful by any stretch. And if anyone has rich parents, please donate and get us a new name.”

Leadership training was required for every student listener, scheduled a few days before the new students arrived. “The program was very well done,” upper Sangye Sherpa said. “I learned how to be a better person for others, as well as how

to help students thrive in the rigorous Exeter environment.”

“I really enjoyed our training because we learned how to help out students in our community,” senior Enzo Nakornsri added, “which is important to make sure students on campus maintain a healthy relationship with their peers and themselves.”

Other student listeners provided some feedback to improve next year’s training. “For next year’s program, I would suggest less orientation because it was a bit of a drag,” Han said.

“I would have the student leaders come back a little later so that it wasn’t two hours of meetings and then just the rest of the day with nothing open,” Newby said.

New students shared their most memorable experiences with their orientation. “I really enjoyed the class activities during orientation,” Su said. “I got to know some more people including the post graduates, and I think it’s always fun and easy to start off the school year. I’m feeling excited.”

Some students commented on the things the Academy could improve in future years. “I see the value in these orientation programs for underclassmen, but most upperclassmen, especially seniors, are already familiar with each other from past years. Excluding the new students in our grade, I would suggest other practical ways of bonding than activities we have done since prep year,” Patel said.

“The Academy seemed to have overenrolled this year,” lower Emily Chai-Onn said. “We don’t have the facilities in certain dorms, Amen included, to accommodate all those people out of the blue. Most of the singles are considered emergency doubles; my room definitely wasn’t meant to fit two people in it. This dorm situation is something the Academy should reconsider in the future.”

“Personally, I think we could have maybe a day after move-in where

we don’t have any required appointments,” lower Finn Lorgen said. “But I don’t think it’s too big a deal and I can see why the administration wouldn’t want to do that. It could be nice, though, and it would accommodate people who arrive later because of a flight.”

New students discussed some highlights of the move-in process. “My favorite part was moving into my dorm,” prep Shawna Jiang said. “I really like Amen because it feels like you’re living in a big mansion with all of your friends.”

“I like the system they had for Dunbar, where you drive up and put your stuff down and they bring it to the dorm,” lower Kenzie Carty said. “I think it’s such an amazing process. The proctors have to work pretty hard to bring stuff up and down constantly, but it definitely sets a good impression for your dorm when you first move in.”

“My move-in was awesome,” new lower Bella Bueno said. “I didn’t even know Clare, but she came in and helped me move in and Evie did too. I met new people through the move-in and it was pretty smooth.”

Lamont Hall Faculty and Latin Instructor Lina Wang shared her perspectives on move in day. “Each of Lamont’s dorm faculty had a two-hour shift on move-in day, but I have to give the proctors most of the credit! They were all so helpful and warm to new and returning students alike,” she continued, “I found the practice of moving students’ belongings to their dorms via golf carts to be a great one—it lightened the burden on students and their families, and it reduced traffic on campus.”

Nguyen also talked about her excitement for the upcoming year. “My favorite part is probably my classes and my friends,” she said. “Even though the campus itself is also really beautiful, the most exciting things are getting started with my classes and meeting all my new friends. In terms of workload, I think it’s manageable, though I’d say it’s a lot more than what I’m used to.”

New lower Hazel Mutindwa shared her excitement for the new year. “The most exciting part was seeing the campus and the people. Although I had been on campus for admissions tours, I had never felt what it was like to be a student, not a visitor.”

“I hope everyone has a good year,” lower Dylan Schwab said. “The first two weeks are either the easiest or the hardest, depending on what year you’re in, obviously. But I think everyone has a place here, and I’m looking forward to the term ahead.”

# Activities at Exeter Cont.

Upper Atishay Jain, co-head of Neuroscience Club, echoed similar sentiments. “Neuroscience and Biology Club have both been super rewarding with being able to do dissections and experiments.”

Senior Rollie Castineyra shed light on two clubs he believed to be underrated: Surf Club and Album Club. “Album Club is great, they go to Grill and do homework, talk with friends, and listen to music. Surf Club meets [in the] early mornings, and they’ll surf outside of campus on Hampton Beach. Shout out [to] Nick Rose and Andy Horrihan who run those two clubs,” Castineyra said.

When asked about his favorite activity on campus, Castineyra replied: “I’m biased for the basketball team. We’ve had a great culture the last two years. We lost a lot of guys that were a big part of the program, but this year we got new guys like Mike, Aiden, and TT, these three PGs that have picked right back up where the other guys left off. I’ve had a lot of fun with them so far and hopefully we’ll get some wins this year.”

“I really enjoy doing sports at Exeter,” upper Sonia Soloviova said in agreement. “The sportsmanship and team spirit in this school is so endearing. I do tennis and I love our team with my entire heart.”

In addition to the Acade-

my’s many excellent athletic offerings, the student-run Exeter Student Service Organization (ESSO) provides a plethora of community service based clubs for students to join. “ESSO has been a great place for me to be able to give back to the Exeter community,” Patel said. “If I could encourage everyone to join a particular club, it would most definitely be an ESSO club.”

Upper David Goodall expressed agreement. “I would definitely encourage other students to try out some new ESSO clubs. I have had really rewarding experiences at ESSO Music Lessons, where you get to teach local Exeter children an instrument or give vocal lessons.”

“Acappella is [also] a great experience,” Goodall continued. “My personal favorite acappella club is The Exeteras, the tenor-bass ensemble on campus.”

Apart from student-run musical clubs like The Exeteras, the Exeter music department also offers ensembles and private lessons. “The music department is so underrated on campus,” senior Ella Kim said. “I take private [guitar] lessons with Mr. Sinclair. He’s been around and working with Exeter since when my dad went here in the eighties. He’s just an amazing person.”

“Everybody in the music department is so endlessly kind,

forgiving and understanding,” Kim continued. “They know that it’s not always a priority for everyone, but they are willing to put in as much effort as they can into your happiness and your benefit. It’s great.”

Upper Indigo Ogiste echoed Kim’s sentiment. “We had our first orchestra meeting on Monday, and we played Beethoven’s 7th Symphony. I literally felt out of this world, and I was about to cry. I was telling my stand partner, ‘This is insane.’”

“I feel like whenever I play, especially in an orchestra, I forget everything [else],” Ogiste shared. “It also reminds me why I love the cello so much, which is really cheesy, but it’s true.”

Meanwhile, Jain also shared his love for Model United Nations. “Model UN is a really great club for building really strong friendships. I get to go off campus and do tournaments, so that’s really exciting,” Jain said.

“For me, it’s a tie between Mock Trial and Model UN,” Senior Tucker Gibbs said regarding his favorite club. “I love both very dearly. Mock Trial is where I’ve met some of my closest friends over my four years in the club. It’s a very tight-knit community. Model UN on the other hand is much more practical and actively exciting. I’ve also met a ton of great people through

there. They’re all excellent people.”

“I think DRAMAT is really cool,” upper Mav Murray said about Exeter’s student-run theatre club. “I think DRAMAT and Daniel Webster Debate Society (DWDS) are the coolest and most inclusive clubs. Regardless of your amount of experience, everyone learned a lot of substantive debate material [in DWDS] last year, made a lot of really good friends, competed a lot in different tournaments, and they were all really excited to be a part of it.”

Affinity spaces also make up a significant part of campus life. “I think all the culture clubs on campus are an amazing space for students to get to know people outside of dorms and sports teams,” Kim shared. “I’ve met some of my best friends in Korean Society just by chance. There is a mutual understanding of identity between you all which really sets you up for building strong relationships.”

Senior Yasmin Salerno agreed. “[The best club is] La Alianza Latina,” Salerno said, referring to the Academy’s Latinx and Hispanic affinity group. “It’s super chill and the most fun club that I’ve participated in, as well as the most laid back.”

In addition to La Alianza Latina (LAL), the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) sponsors Asian Voices (AV),

Association of Low Income Exonians (ALIE), Transitions—an affinity group for women and genderqueer students who identify as Black or Latinx—and Black Students of Excellence (BSE), as well as other varieties of affinity spaces that students can join according to their identity. Non-affinity spaces within the Office of Multicultural Affairs realm include the Feminist Union, Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA), International Student Alliance (ISA), and more.

Students also shared advice about clubs for new students. “Exeter is only partly the academics,” Patel said. “The remainder and majority of Exeter is what you do outside of [academics] and clubs are a major aspect of that.”

“Most people don’t mind whether or not you show up to the meetings. So just sign up for what you think interests you,” Gibbs said. “Do what you think sounds cool. Stick with what you like.”

“Don’t join like 20 clubs,” Salerno added. “Other people may tell you to try everything, but I don’t think that’s a good idea. I think you just end up being stressed out, especially as you’re starting off the school year. I think the best mode is to go into things that you’re interested in. Even if you do get into 10 clubs at first, try to narrow it down and don’t hold yourself to the standard of consistently

attending these 20 clubs.”

Soloviova also shared an interesting perspective: “Go to clubs that seem boring, usually those are the fun ones.”

This year, in addition to student-led clubs, the Student Activities department has planned a multitude of events and dances. In the fall term, there will be the Fall Dance in October and then the Big Red Rumble after the Exeter-Andover games. Following that is Winter Formal, and then two more dances in the spring if COVID-19 conditions allow.

For students interested in starting their own initiative, Student Activities will open applications in the spring. “New club applications are only in the spring term,” McGahie shared. “What I have witnessed happening in previous years is that it’s almost like this free-for-all [happening] all year and it just becomes overwhelming. So [now] the idea is that new clubs are formed in the spring term. That way they’re ready to go for Club Expo in the fall.”

With all the Academy has to offer extracurricularly, students are bound to find something suitable to their interests. Whether those interests lie in STEM related fields, environmental activism, music, writing, a sport, or any other niche field, there is something for every Exonian at the Academy.

# Speak About It Cont.

with her over the summer and she wanted to bring Speak About It to campus to perform about healthy relationships and consent.”

Malhotra continued to describe how the group had come to campus in 2019 and received positive feedback for a similar performance, encouraging Dr. Palmer to invite them back. “This was their first year doing this specific programming. Moving forward, we hope that we can work with Speak About It to reflect students’ feedback and help construct a better suited program for the students,” she added.

On the same day, preps and lowers attended the digital presentation “Our Digital Selves.” The slideshow sought to challenge assumptions surrounding gender identity and relationships. As the speaker posed questions to the audience, students were able to share their ideas directly to the speaker or through an anonymous text line for questions and advice.

Some underclassmen found the presentation awkward. “Aside from the expected goofing off, students spoke up with questions and comments even if they weren’t entirely sure about what they were saying,” lower Bea Prairie said.

Lower Ethan Liu agreed with the sentiment. “I think it’s sort of a way of coping with the awkwardness. The presenters also accepted that this is who we are at that age,” he added.

Students still acknowledged that the presentation was necessary and helpful. “I do think presentations like ‘Speak About It’ are important, due to the fact many students never got the opportunity to learn about this openly,” Liu said.

“Without formal settings to learn about these topics, people would be left with varying levels of information which can lead to unsafe situations,” Prairie said. “It began the conversation, and that’s an important first step towards a healthy sex culture on campus.”

Many upperclassmen agreed with the necessity of the boundary and consent training, and many had positive

reactions to the Speak About It performance. “I thought that it actually did a good job of keeping the subject matter in an approachable way, without diminishing its importance,” upper Alex Rosen said. “I do agree, though, that they treated some parts, especially the parts with sexual assault, with too much levity.”

Senior Eric Zhang had similarly positive thoughts about the performance. “I thought that the actors were very enthusiastic, and we definitely learned a lot of information that is very important for the student’s health and well-being,” Zhang said.

Upper and discussion facilitator Akubah Ndubah also spoke about the aspects of the presentation she really enjoyed. “It was a lot more straightforward than I expected, which I liked. They didn’t really try to beat around the bush about any of the topics,” Ndubah said. “I thought that sharing real stories of people was also a very interesting aspect.”

“I really like how they incorporated the whole active bystander idea, and showed different ways that you could intervene. I think it is something that people don’t really talk about enough, so I think it is really cool that they did that,” Ndubah added.

“I thought that when the performance took itself seriously, it was good,” senior Liam Brown said. “The stories that they shared were impactful, and when they were doing things like providing advice for mitigating the effects of alcohol and its potential ability to enable assault, I thought that was incredibly important and well done.”

Reflecting on the performance, Zhang said, “The biggest takeaway for me was the importance of practicing safe sex and making sure that all parties’ interests and feelings are represented.”

Many students, though they enjoyed the performance, suggested ways that the play and the organization could have been improved. “I think it would’ve been good if the students had the opportunity to interact with the actors,” Zhang said.

“I think they could have looked into this school a little more and how it works,” Senior Oliver Brandes mentioned, adding another way it could have been slightly improved. “They just were trying to be relatable at the start and they didn’t come across as well as they, I think, would have liked to.”

Brown agreed. “Sex is inherently awkward. It’s an awkward conversation because we live in a culture broadly where talking about sex is taboo. And so when people talk about it, there’s chuckles, there’s laughs. Trying to get over that with jokes, I understand that,” Brown said. “But there’s got to be more effort put into it. That cannot be what the final product looks like because making people laugh through it doesn’t work in having a mature conversation about sex. We need to be able to speak anatomically correctly. We need to be able to say very explicitly what we are talking about.”

“When you use jokes to get over that initial awkwardness, that’s great,” Brown continued. “But when you do it like that, you undercut your message. You make it impossible for the audience that needs to hear it most, which is especially the older athletes and men on campus, to feel like they’re being spoken to without being spoken down to. You make it impossible for them to relate to the performance and think about it in the context of their own behavior.”

Some upperclassmen felt a lack of consistency between the presentation and the culture on campus. “I think that the presentation did a good job of highlighting the importance of consent, and that people will have it more present in their minds, especially in these upcoming weeks,” Rosen said. “But I do think that Exeter as a whole isn’t doing enough to promote safe sex practices and sex positivity.”

“Not being able to have these conversations without laughing creates an environment that fosters sexual assault. If we cannot do better, it is genuinely worrying for the direction that Exeter is going,” Brown said. “And I think we have made a lot

of progress, but I think it’s impossible to ignore that this has been an ongoing problem. There are people on campus who have been victims of it. And the perpetrators are also in some cases on campus. We are not outside of the scope of this problem, not by a long shot, and we cannot treat it as if we are.”

Upperclassmen also commented on the effectiveness of the brief discussions following the performance. As a discussion facilitator, Ndubah described how the discussions’ depth and length didn’t match some of the facilitators’ expectations. “I expected to have it be more focused on the discussion, but I feel like people didn’t take it as seriously. It felt more like an afterthought to the people who attended, which I thought was interesting,” Ndubah said. “I sat down and tried to get a conversation going, but then all the other groups started getting up and leaving, and I feel like no one really wanted to be there.”

Malhotra, who facilitated upper and senior discussions, commented on the intentions behind the discussions and compared those with the actual impacts. “The whole idea was to talk actively about consent, answer any questions, and not let the performance go in through one ear and out the other,” Malhotra said. “Consent isn’t talked about very much on campus, so one way to start those conversations is to have these facilitated discussions, and having them run by students allows it to be less formal and allows people to open up more.”

“In my experience, in my discussion groups, there wasn’t much conversation happening,” Malhotra continued, referring to the actual day of the event. “I think this can be attested to the fact that it was very late at night and people were tired.”

“I think the intent of the groups was good, to start those conversations. I heard from other people that it was hard to get people to start talking about it. So maybe that is something we can work on as a community—to make these conversations



*Courtesy of Speak About It*

about consent, relationships and sex more normalized,” Malhotra added.

Still, senior Matt Dame felt like the overall impact of the performance was positive. “I think having the discussions after is a good way to solidify any information and it’s also a good opportunity for people to ask questions,” he said, commenting on the discussions that followed.

With the opening of Visitations after the performance, uppers and seniors also discussed how it would affect these policies, and how the school creates a positive culture. Dame shared “the school stays away from the fact that kids are having sex—that’s just a fact of high school.”

Dame continued “If the school is not giving any options for a safe environment, kids are going to be stuck in more dangerous situations.”

Malhotra shared some ways that EASA plans to address such topics in the future. “I think there are many different views on these boundary trainings. I think in one way, it is very good to have repetition, to have these every year and really get it stuck in your brain, and to start these conversations,” she said. “But, also, a lot of people get tired continuously listening to these boundary trainings and feel stuck.”

“The training is happening with faculty too. The faculty on campus go through training every year, where they talk about student relationships, faculty relationships

with students, and how those should be.”

“I think going forward, they are super important, but up to conversation as to how those should look, because once again, these are for the students,” Malhotra said. All that the boundary training is trying to do is to inform everyone of how to respect other people and how to ensure that you yourself are respected.”

Looking to the future, Brown shared ways that students could better handle issues of consent and sexual education. “People should talk to their friends about this, but also check them when they make jokes or make light of the importance of consent.”

“Don’t be mean about it—you are their friend for a reason—but tell them that it’s not acceptable,” Brown added. “I think if the Academy is not going to step up and make meaningful change, students have to.”

“Just know that there are resources on campus and there are people that you can talk to,” Malhotra said, as a message to all students. “If you were going through anything, there are your student leaders, student listeners, proctors and faculty that you might feel comfortable with. There’s CAPS. There are so many people here to talk to, so don’t ever feel that you are alone.”

“It is so easy to feel lonely in such a big school where you’re without family, but we are all here for you,” Malhotra concluded.

## » TOWN

Read about Street Restaurant and Exeter Cycling's views on inflation at Exeter, 4.

## » FOW

Read about Director of the Academy Library Laura Clark Wood's passion in woodworking, 6.

## » REVIEW

Read Ariana Thornton '24 and Chengyue Zhang '24's reviews of *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, 7.

# Senior of the Week: Kodi Suzuki Lopez



Senior Kodi Suzuki Lopez sits on the stairs outside Kirtland House.

Minseo Kim/*The Exonian*

By ANVI BHATE, ERIN CHEN, and EMILIA KNIESTEDT

Whether it's a rainy afternoon in the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), or a late night in the corner of the Wheelwright common room, senior Ramon Kodi Suzuki Lopez is always ready to welcome anyone with open arms. Heavily involved in many of campus' multicultural events and OMA clubs, everyone who knows him can attest that Suzuki Lopez brings a sense of comfort and joy wherever he goes.

Raised in a small neighborhood in East Los Angeles, Suzuki Lopez went to a public charter for most of his life. "The charter really embraced learning a lot more than my public school did," Suzuki Lopez

said. His public school teachers would get angry at him for being ahead of peers, whereas in the charter, they would offer extra classes.

The advanced classes led him to attending a summer program at Harvard Westlake, a private school in central Los Angeles. "There, I watched this science experiment called elephant's toothpaste," Suzuki Lopez said. "You pour these chemicals together in a little jar and clouds come out of that, and it looks like elephant's toothpaste."

The experiment showed Suzuki Lopez the vastness of opportunities and resources at a private school. "We had laptops and the essentials at my public charter, just not that extra funding," Suzuki Lopez said. "I applied to

boarding school just because I thought it would be an interesting option, because I've always been independent."

A few months later, Suzuki Lopez arrived at Exeter. He quickly made strong connections with his peers, but also encountered new struggles. "It was hard for me because, in eighth grade, my family became homeless," Suzuki Lopez said. "I missed a lot of end-of-eighth-grade schooling and so I struggled a little bit in classes."

"In my hometown, around 97 percent of the people are Mexican and Latino, so I was always surrounded by people who share my Mexican identity. There was a big culture shock coming here, which made me feel alone," Suzuki Lopez added. "I also felt alone here being low

income, and I felt like other people didn't understand that struggle. It was kind of isolating, in an identity sense."

A person who helped him with these feelings was Giovanna Romero '20, a senior at the time. Suzuki Lopez described how Gio was also Mexican, and a member of La Alianza Latina (LAL), an affinity group for Latino students. She invited him and some other friends to hang out in her room. "She brought out spicy Mexican candy, played music, and we heard our Chicano accents come out," Suzuki Lopez recounted. "In that room, at that time, I really felt a sense of home again. She also forced me to go to LAL and dragged me to OMA, and those spaces have become places on campus that I really, really

love and devote all of my extra time to now."

After four years of working with OMA, Suzuki Lopez has contributed a lot to the space. In addition to leading three affinity groups, Suzuki Lopez works as an OMA proctor, and organizes many projects and events.

With senior Val Whitten, Suzuki Lopez created the *Días De Los Muertos* festival to appreciate the Latin American cultures that represent many students on campus. The festival shared cultural foods through a catered dinner and Latino students shared their country's snacks and traditions through country-specific booths. A large-scale event held in Grainger, the festival will come back again this year. "He's putting in the work to make sure that even after he leaves, it'll be able to continue on, kind of like setting that framework for an annual tradition," senior Andrew Serdar Espinoza said.

Another aspect of identity Suzuki Lopez wants students to feel supported in is being low-income. As a co-head of the Association of Low-Income Exonians, he works to make sure students feel understood and comfortable. In his lower year, Suzuki Lopez also gave a TED talk about his low-income identity. "I think what really drove me to do that was knowing that there were probably other low income students on campus who also feel isolated, because there's still like a substantial amount of us who are on full financial aid. There's a good chance that other students on campus have gone through what I've gone through," Suzuki Lopez said.

Suzuki Lopez's thoughtfulness really makes him an encouraging person to be around. "I have never witnessed Kodi being an inauthentic version of himself, and I believe he is the prime example of an amazing advocate for people who may not feel as though they have a voice," senior Lydia Osei said.

Suzuki Lopez is also a mentor for the Equitable Exeter Experience (E3), an OMA-run pre-orientation program for incoming students from marginalized communities. "He re-

ally made it possible to get to know the people in my group and made opportunities available for everybody there," Dhruv Reddy, a new lower in Suzuki Lopez's group this year said.

Layla Whitaker, a returning lower, reflected on her experience last year with Suzuki Lopez as a mentor. "He brings support. I know that if I had any question I could always go to him. Even now, a year later," she said.

Outside of OMA, Suzuki Lopez still takes extra steps to help students. In his Japanese classroom last year, he reached out to his teacher, Ms. Tazawa before a field trip, explaining how they are a difficult endeavor for some low-income students who can't afford to pay for experiences outside of what the school supplies. By showing how to set up a field trip stipend, he takes action for others before the problems arise. "Not only is he saving his class, he's saving the classes in the future," Ms. Tazawa said.

Senior Jade Pierce described Suzuki Lopez's unmatched work ethic and dedication to working towards a more ethical campus environment. "Kodi brings a ton to Exeter. He is the only person I know who always goes the extra mile to make sure people are comfortable and held accountable. Exeter has become a much safer place with him around," Pierce said.

Senior Lucy Meyer-Braun emphasized that Suzuki Lopez's work benefits present, as well as future students. "Kodi leaves a legacy of making Exeter the best place for every single person who comes here. No matter what they are fighting or what's holding them back from meaningful opportunities, he leaves a legacy of reaching out to those people and either finding them a space where they can experience everything that they deserve here, or creating one of those spaces."

"Legacy is not like something tangible. It's more like a feeling that you leave people with," senior Sage Murthy said. "I feel like Kodi's going to leave a lot of younger students with gratitude."

## Exeter Town Grapples with Inflation

By CASPAR BAILEY, ROHIT KANTAMNENI, CJ SMITH, and HARRY WALKER

Since the beginnings of the COVID-19 pandemic, having confronted restrictions on business operations, the town of Exeter has changed significantly. Over the past few months, businesses have come and gone here at Exeter all while the cost of living has drastically increased. Supply chain shortages and rising inflation have led to price increases across-the-board, affecting Academy students and townspeople alike.

Exonian favorites, such as Stillwell's and Capital Thai, have marked up items on their menus.

Jay McSharry, owner of newly opened Street Restaurant, commented on the ramifications of inflation on his establishment: "All pay has gone up 20 percent, and food costs have certainly gone up. Unfortunately, we have to pass some of those costs onto the consumer... and we've really seen prices jump."

Indeed, labor shortages have plagued local businesses since the onset of the pandemic. McSharry expressed his concern over staffing shortages: "We're not open Sunday or Monday yet, and that's due to staffing. We would be open more if we had more kitchen staff."

Assistant Dean of Student Life Christina Breen explained that staffing

issues exist in the larger Exeter area. "It's all connected to the pandemic and labor shortage. Green Bean closed because they didn't have enough people to work there," Breen said.

Due to rapid increase in consumer activity and the global supply chains' inability to keep up after the pandemic, businesses still struggle to meet customer demand. Todd Wagner, owner of Exeter Cycles, acknowledged the difficulties in keeping up with requests for bikes during the early months of the pandemic. "Nobody anticipated that kind of demand globally for bikes that resulted from the pandemic, so shops like ours sold all of their inventory in a very short period of time, a matter of months.

We soon faced global supply chain issues, such as production interruptions, shipping delays, and increased costs for everything," Wagner said.

All of these issues have concurred with a troubling trend in Exeter: rising real estate prices. According to Zumper, the largest privately owned rental property in North America, the average price for a one-bedroom apartment in Exeter is now \$1700/month, a 26 percent increase from last year. These rent increases have also affected Exeter businesses, and it has played a large part in higher prices for consumers. This also constitutes a major reason as to why small businesses are choosing to leave Exeter. "We have seen increases in rent in

all of our locations. In the Exeter location property tax, electric, gas, plowing, landscaping and more have all increased dramatically," Matt Burke, owner of Las Olas Taqueria, shared. The shaky demand as a result of the pandemic lockdowns further puts their operations under stress.

The town offers students refuge from the day-to-day routine on campus, and offers variability for student life. Recently, with prices on the rise, some Exonians have found themselves without the wherewithal to venture into town. Lower Erin Chen noted that price increases in town had forced her to further economize on adventures into town this year: "I'm more concerned because

I'm a student worker and I used to be able to buy a lot more with my weekly wage."

Lower Lionel Hearon agreed. "I think the people of Exeter, including me, are mad about prices rising," he said.

As effects from the pandemic begin to subside, and real estate prices are projected to decline, there is some hope that establishments in town may soon return to offering more affordable options. However, there is no telling how soon we may see a change. "If I have to go without Lexie's for a long time, I'm not sure what I'm going to have to do," senior Anderson Lynch concluded.

# TV Show Review: *Heartstopper*



By ALLEGRA LAI '26

“It’s hard to be confident when they all see me as a stereotypical gay boy who can’t do sports.” *Heartstopper*, adapted from a comic series by Alice Oseman (she/they), is a coming-of-age LGBTQ+ romance following main characters Charlie Spring and Nick Nelson as they navigate their relationship.

Charlie meets Nick in class on the first day. He is an openly gay boy who was subjected to immense bullying at school the year before, but has since settled into a supportive friend group with Tao Xu and Isaac Henderson, as well as a trans girl Elle Argent, who transferred to an all-girl’s school nearby. Charlie is sat with Nick in

form room on the first day, and he slowly falls for him as his friends tease him for it. At a party, they kiss, which leads Nick to question his already wavering feelings about his own sexuality.

The TV show’s official mixtape features queer artists such as Girl in Red, with her song “Girls” playing in the background of the second episode. The lyrics “I know what I like/ No, this is not a phase/ Or a coming of age/ This will never change”, empower listeners to be true to their sexuality, reassuring them that homophobia and transphobia aren’t to be entertained.

The TV show has already gained much traction from the media, and it has been renewed for two

more seasons covering the second and third books of the comic series, with filming well under way.

*Heartstopper* doesn’t shy away from showing viewers graphic comments that the LGBTQ+ community are often subject to, and the representation in the show is to be lauded. Tara and Darcy are in a queer relationship, while Elle is a trans woman. The show’s target demographic is ages 14+, which largely includes Gen-Z. By bringing these important characters to the screen, queer teens are more likely to feel seen. Furthermore, viewers of *Heartstopper* will hopefully become aware of these recurring social problems, homophobia and the lack of queer representation in the

media.

An equally important part of the series is Nick figuring out his sexuality. Although he develops feelings for Charlie, he has only been in straight relationships previously, and therefore is questioning his sexuality. He does an extensive amount of research, including watching Youtube videos regarding the matter and googling “Am I Gay” quizzes. Although this may seem comical to some, the scenes of Nick alone on his laptop intrinsically capture his conflicting feelings. As the target audience is teens, many must feel that their personal experiences relate to that of Nick’s extremely.

*Heartstopper* also draws close attention to

Courtesy of THEM

the homophobia Charlie and Tara receive as they officially come out of the closet. Charlie experienced severe bullying the year before when he came out, and he still has traumatic flashbacks of the homophobic comments he experienced. As Tara comes out on Instagram, she receives negative comments amongst the positive ones, which upsets her immensely. “I didn’t think that so many people would suddenly think I’m a completely different person,” she says tearfully. “I just want to live my life.” This raises awareness to the amount of negative backlash queer people face as they come out of the closet, provoking sympathy

and understanding from the viewers.

As a diverse school community, *Heartstopper* is a piece of media for all students. *Heartstopper* touches the heart and takes everyone on an emotional journey, while also raising awareness on the homophobia and various obstacles that the LGBTQ+ community faces on a daily basis. With a cool color palette and iconic animations taken from Oseman’s comics, *Heartstopper* is the epitome of a comfort show to watch anytime, anywhere.

# Movie Review: *Top Gun Maverick*

By NHAN PHAN '24

Do you remember the last time you’ve been to a movie theater? The dark of the room, the velvet, patterned carpet and the popcorn crumbs? The magic of classics brought into reality? Tom Cruise’s most recent masterpiece *Top Gun: Maverick* does this place of wonder justice. It brings out the thrills of cinema, presenting us with an example of how every blockbuster action movie should be duly executed.

What makes *Top Gun: Maverick* the blockbuster movie of 2022 is the mastery with which the movie continues from its predecessor. The sequel brings back a Maverick that has experienced loss, ambition, failure, and guilt. What the first *Top Gun* movie managed to convey was the sense of competition within the crew. Phoenix, Hangman, Payback, and Rooster provided the movie with the camaraderie that *Top Gun: Maverick* needs. Each character has a history. Their reconciliation with their past selves and their realization for the importance of teamwork are clear in the way the characters choose to see their teammates differently at the end of the movie. There was also a reunion between Maverick and his old friend, Iceman. Val Kilmer, who plays Tom ‘Iceman’ Kazansky, has been away from the series due to illness; he returned to *Top Gun: Maverick* one more time. Cruise and Kilmer delivered an incredibly poignant scene where the



two shared an unspoken understanding of their history together. This moment provides the movie with much-needed peace in the midst of the jam-packed action; as Iceman passes away in peace, we once again get to experience Maverick at his most vulnerable, emotional self. All of these aspects of the movie demonstrate how *Top Gun: Maverick* is a masterful sequel to the original that brought the series to fame.

Every movie needs a gripping soundtrack to evoke emotions from the audience. It would be remiss not to mention the soundtrack of this movie. *Top Gun: Maverick*’s soundtrack, masterfully crafted by Hans Zimmer and Lady Gaga, portrays the heroism of the characters in the movie while also capturing the essence of the action and

the movement within the movie with its fast-moving tempo. The melody of Lady Gaga’s “Hold My Hand” plays throughout the background of the movie (including in the scene where Penny and Maverick reunited at the famous I-Bar); the song serves as a metaphor for the relationship between Maverick and Penny. The song’s lyrics: “To tell me you need me, I see that you’re bleeding/You don’t need to show me again/ But if you decide to, I’ll ride in this life with you/ I won’t let go til’ the end” sums up the highs and lows of their relationship as Maverick grapples with guilt and the prospect of redemption. Lady Gaga had a gigantic influence on the soundtrack: the melody of her song provided the main leitmotif of the movie’s soundtrack.

Hans Zimmer added the cinematic depth that was needed to emphasize the scale of the situations within the movie as well as highlight the suspense that makes for an anticipating cinematic experience.

Finally, a characteristic of every single Tom Cruise movie that sets them apart from other action blockbuster movies is its authenticity. Fans of Cruise would know that the majority of the stunts performed in all of his movies are performed by him. From the challenging corkscrew helicopter manoeuvre or the Halo jump in Mission Impossible: Fallout to hanging off of an airplane while in the air in Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation, Cruise has a knack for ensuring that the movie is as realistic as possible. In this movie, Cruise took

the time to master operating fighter jets while putting all his other actors in flight school and through the same training regime. The G-Force experienced by all of the actors in this movie was authentic; to be fit for the role, the actors in the movie had to undergo intensive physical and mental training. According to director Joseph Kosinski, he took over 800 hours of footage for this film to craft the most exhilarating aerial shots in the history of cinema. This just shows Cruise’s unwavering commitment to upholding the authenticity of his craft.

Overall, *Top Gun: Maverick* is worthy of the praise it received from critics and audience members alike from around the world. The fact that this

Courtesy of Wall Street Journal

sequel was over 30 years in the making is evidence of Cruise’s effort to truly perfect the emotional, physical, and aerial delivery of the storyline. This movie is notable for being a distinctly cinematic experience; *Top Gun: Maverick* cannot be fully enjoyed any other way. Combined with a moving soundtrack, creative editing, poignant emotional delivery, and a kick of badass aerial action, *Top Gun: Maverick* has delivered everything a blockbuster could ask for, and beyond.

# Faculty of the Week: Laura Clark Wood



By **ASHLEY JANE, HANNAH PARK, and ROXANE PARK**

Tucked away in an alcove on the first floor of the Class of 1945 Library, you will find a 15 foot recessed bookshelf stacked with manuscripts which have sat untouched for decades. Stretching toward the even higher ceilings and framed by warm cascading light, this bookshelf is the grand centerpiece of Director of the Academy Library Laura Clark Wood's office.

Like the hidden nature of her office, Wood's role focuses on the behind-the-scenes operations of the Library. "I am less likely to be the person you meet if you went to ask for help," Wood explained. "I'm helping the staff figure out how to do what we need to do, [...] and [establish] our priorities as a team [in order to] best meet the needs of the faculty and the students here."

Wood also oversees the Academy Library's collaborations with other departments on campus. "Within the community, [my role is] making sure that the Library stays relevant—[con-

centrating on] how we build relationships with other departments to make sure we're meeting their needs and looking for opportunities to create new events, partnerships or programs for students."

Dean of Faculty Eimer Page affirmed Wood's ability and expertise in her role. "Ms. Wood brings to us an ideal combination of experience at world-class educational institutions and a deep interest in collaboration with academic departments," Page said. "She is equipped with exactly the skills we need to bring the Library to its full potential within our campus."

Wood found her love for books early. Growing up in a rather homogenous town in North Shore, Massachusetts, she frequently turned to reading as "a way to have new experiences and understand other people and other perspectives," an interest which later blossomed into her love for research and longstanding librarian career.

"I love to do research, and I love to help other people [with] research that results in their writing," Wood shared. "Libraries are a big

part of [the research] process, so I became more and more interested in libraries as a way for me to be a part of the educational world."

According to Associate Director of the Library Beth Rohloff, Wood's experience in research is wide-ranging. "[Ms. Wood has served] in leadership roles at Harvard, Tufts, and Emory, so she has a unique perspective in knowing what type of research students are doing at the college level and what services and collections are at their disposal," Rohloff explained.

With her extensive experience working at the university level, the Academy appealed to Wood as a tight-knit high school institution. "I wanted to continue being in a place where educational excellence is really at the heart of what we do, but to do it in a smaller community where there was a greater commitment to building the community and students as whole people," Wood said.

"At the university level, it can get very intense and be very much about advanced research and people

*Courtesy of exeter.edu*

launching to do other things. There's something about the high school years where you're really focused on being here for this time period," Wood continued.

Just two weeks into the term, Wood is already excited to help connect the Exeter community to the Library. "Some students think of the Library as a very intense place," she reflected, "because it's where they do hard work and a very academic place. Other people think of the Library as more of a place to hang out or to just have a spot that they can go to regularly."

To benefit all visitors to the Library, Wood is launching a new initiative of Library affirmations. "We will be putting up little statements, that is our message from the Library staff to students, to say 'it's going to be okay,' and 'you've got this,' and 'we're on your side,' and 'we believe in you,'" Wood said. "We want you to see the Library as an ally in your studies here."

When not planning Library operations or cozying up with her own book to

enjoy, Wood loves to repurpose old items and dabbles in woodworking. "I like to build things, and I like to do things with my hands," Wood shared. "I have very little woodworking knowledge, but I've realized that you can just try things and they don't necessarily work out perfectly, but you can have a lot of fun doing it."

Wood recounted her most recent woodworking exploit. "This past weekend, I finished making a bench using the headboard and footboard of a bed. It was mostly to reuse something that I got at an auction for \$5," Wood said. "I took the footboard and cut it in half. I had to get lumber to build the seat part, then I painted it, and now it looks like a real piece of furniture."

In her free time, Wood also loves to be outdoors. One of the things that she is most excited about, having recently moved to New Hampshire with her wife and son, is all of the hiking opportunities that the state has to offer. "During the pandemic, I did a lot of shorter hikes in Massachusetts because it was local, outside, and safe," Wood shared. "Now, I'm really interested in seeing various parks and mountains on walks and hikes around the area. I'm also ambitious to tackle some of the 4,000 footers!"

Wood's kindness and enthusiastic work ethic has already shined in her short time at the Academy and is evident to her co-workers. "I appreciate that Ms. Wood has enthusiastically jumped right into meeting and connecting with members of the Exeter Community," Rohloff said. "She has a keen interest in learning as much as she can about our students, teachers, and community members to ensure that the Library is providing the proper support needed."

Fellow Library staff member Melinda Dolan praised Wood and her drive to make a "welcoming and open" Library community. "She is an extremely articulate, thoughtful and kind person interested in having the Library be the hub of the Academy campus." Dolan described. "I'm most excited about [her] new interpretations of what a Library can and should be on a campus such as ours and how she will implement those necessary changes."

One thing Wood hopes that students keep in mind is to "read for pleasure, [and] not just for academics" during their time at the Academy. "Whether it's newspapers, graphic novels, historical fiction, or [...] anything, I would like [reading] to stay a part of your life, not just a chore that you have to do," Wood emphasized.

"I encourage students, whether as a member of a club, class, or on your own, to reach out to Ms. Wood if there is something you have wondered about in terms of the Library or have an idea about how the Library can better support your Exeter experience," Rohloff said. "She wants to hear from you! I also encourage you to speak to anyone from the Library staff as Ms. Wood has made a point of getting to know each and every one of us."

"She's a very kind person and would want you to feel free to approach her with any ideas that you might have for the Library," Dolan added.

For all students, Wood has a final word of advice. "The Library is a resource, it's a building, but it's also a set of people who really care about your experience here and your success," Wood said.

## Exonians Reflect on Summer Experiences

By **NATALY DELCID, LAUREN KIM, and CATHERINE WU**

After graduation in early June, Exonians and faculty members departed campus to begin their summer journeys. Whether they spent them relaxing on vacation or chasing their passions at academic or athletic programs, Exonians enjoyed the well-deserved break from fast-paced life at the Academy.

Besides attending music programs or training for a sport, older Exonians also spent their free time committing to jobs or getting their driver's license. Additionally, many began studying for their SATs and writing their application essays with deadlines just around the corner. Alternately, incoming Exonians utilized this time to prepare for their first year at the Academy. As COVID-19 restrictions loosened for the first time since 2020, many students also used this summer as an opportunity to uncover new travel destinations around the globe.

Students commented on summer vacation plans. "I got really tired of going to all my sister's tournaments all the time for basketball," prep Rebecca Nguyen said. "So I flew out by myself to go to Utah to visit one of my best friends and all her friends there. Utah was really fun because we're very outdoor-sy people and got to hike and mountain bike, go on boats and stuff like that."

Similarly, upper Zu-

anna Szul noted her travels, "This summer I went back to Poland. I also participated in internships and did some off season training."

Many Exonians noted traveling with family. "I traveled to Australia for six weeks to visit my family in Melbourne," senior Jesalina Phan said. "It had been five years since I had seen them because of COVID, so I was super excited. We were super busy having large family parties, going out to the city with the cousins, and taking a road trip to the hot springs, which is a tradition of ours. My mom, brother, and I were staying with my mom's sister (my aunt) and my cousins, so there was never a dull moment!"

"My summer was great," upper Advay Nomula added. "I saw some family in India and stayed there for two months. I attended my uncle's marriage and also learned a lot about the culture and religious principles. I did some SAT prep as well."

Prep Shawna Jiang said, "I moved around a lot with family, because we are living in South Africa but relocated to Egypt, then moved to L.A. to drop my brother off at Thatcher, and now here."

"In general, I had pretty good food [this summer]," lower Davido Zhang said. "It was really nice. We visited my hometown, got back to a lot of different places— I was continuously traveling. Since I had to quarantine in China,

which wasn't so great, I had enough time to finish my math acceleration, just staying in the hotel in my room. A highlight from this summer was just that I got to enjoy so much authentic Chinese food that I didn't get the chance to eat in the US."

"We went to Prague," Señor Perez said. "One of the very interesting things that I found impressive was one of the synagogues that I visited (Pinkas Synagogue). They had all these lists of names of people from all over the world, for people who died from the Holocaust."

"I took a few day trips down to Santa Cruz and I slept a lot and ate a lot of good food," upper Sarah Sargent shared. "I also worked out quite a bit and spent a good chunk of time just hanging out with friends and spending time with my relatives."

"It was really fun, I spent a lot of much needed time relaxing and de-stressing from the daily life of Exeter. I also kept in contact with my friends through social media," reflected senior Cindy Su. "This summer I ran into a lot of other Exeter students at summer camp and it was really fun to see them."

For Phan, her summer meant traveling with her orchestra, playing violin. "I went to Greece on a two-week tour with my orchestra, the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra," shared Phan. "It was the first time I had ever traveled without my parents, and I had the best time. We traveled to a new city ev-

ery two days to play concerts at various indoor and outdoor venues, but the whole experience— eating huge plates of souvlaki and gyros, walking around the Parthenon, meeting locals who showed us around— was very memorable," Phan continued.

Upper Jane Park, who also toured with the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra in Greece, added, "I spent my summer after the Greece tour with the National Youth Orchestra (NYO). We had a three week residency in Miami, upstate New York, and then New York City. The program concluded in a concert in Carnegie Hall. I was able to learn an incredible amount about leadership in an orchestra, and I also met lifelong friends. I would then apply as leader at the school orchestra."

Several students, including upper Atishay Jain, commented on summer programs and ramping demands. "I did a couple of internships, some shadowing, and also went to India for a bit. This summer was definitely busier because it was [going into] upper year and our workload increased."

"My summer was very good," upper Neil Varwandakar shared. "I went to Germany and did business with the Exeter summer program. It was a very good experience."

Prep Victoria Vanderslice pursued her interests in law and U.S. history with international summer programs.

"I had originally

planned to spend three weeks at a CTY camp studying 'The Great Cases of American History', but it unfortunately got canceled at the last minute due to staffing issues after the pandemic. I had been so looking forward to learning more about crucial Supreme Court decisions and how they affected the society we see today, but I made it up by going to a 'future career' camp I found in London," said Vanderslice. "I was given the choice to study a particular career during my time there and decided to study law. Guest lawyers would come to our classroom and talk about the field that they specialized in, like criminal law, corporate law, and family law."

Back on campus, Japanese Instructor and Exeter Summer faculty member Kayoko Tazawa reflected on her experience as an Abbot Hall faculty member during Exeter Summer.

"I've been out of the dorm for over 10 years now," said Tazawa, "and it was nice to work in a dorm again, because you connect with students on a different level. That reminded me how fun it is to do dorm duty, especially with the younger Access Exeter students."

Many uppers commented on their SAT prep in addition to summer plans. "I had a good summer. I primarily studied for my SAT, but also got the chance and went back to Minnesota to visit some friends from my hometown," upper Jonny Chen said.

"I worked on SAT prep and I think I prepared pretty well," upper William Lu shared. "Though I didn't hit my goal, it was close enough. Having SAT prep made this summer less-so of a 'real break.' I also took some classes, and the pressure was definitely on coming into upper year. But I still managed to make the best out of my summer and not get overwhelmed."

Some new students shared their studying in preparation for the coming school year. "I did physics because I knew I was going to take it this year," Nguyen said. "I also did a bunch of reading for leisure, but I tried not to get myself too overwhelmed to a point where I would ruin my summer."

Overall, Exonians feel well-rested after their summer, and are ready to apply the knowledge gained over the summer into everyday Academy life.

"I had a great time at the program and it was the highlight of my summer! I really hope to bring these skills to Exeter, especially at the Harkness table," says Vanderslice.

"I think I spent a lot of time being reflective and thinking about the things I'm grateful for at Exeter. I came back into this year like I'm gonna take advantage of every opportunity to spend with my friends and I'm really excited about being fully back in person and having no mask restrictions indoors," Su concluded.

# Everything Everywhere All At Once: Two Views

By **ARIANA THORNTON** '24

“You’re capable of anything because you’re so BAD at everything!” This is just one of the oxymorons that deftly theme the absurdist Asian-American sci-fi comedy-drama film *Everything Everywhere All at Once*.

The film thrusts us into the world of Evelyn Wang, a working-class Chinese-American immigrant mother who can only give a few seconds of attention to each of the many things on her plate: her struggling laundromat business audited by the IRS; her husband, Waymond, trying to serve her divorce papers; her demanding father here to visit;

and her daughter, Joy, trying to get her mother to accept her girlfriend. So much is going on, and Evelyn has no time to think at all. She simply acts—she delegates, interrupts conversations, and scurries around in a precarious balance between efficiency and complete chaos.

It is on this day that Evelyn discovers the multiverse. “Alpha Waymond,” her husband from the Alphaverse alternate reality, arrives to tell her that a great evil, Jobu Tupaki, is threatening the multiverse, and only Evelyn can turn the tide of the war. Why? Jobu Tupaki was once Evelyn’s daughter in the Alphaverse. A brilliant scientist, Alpha Evelyn pressured Joy to participate in a “verse-jumping” experiment

gone wrong. Stretched past her limit, Alpha Joy’s mind fractured, damning her to experience everything, in all the alternate universes, at the same exact time. Jobu Tupaki therefore finds that nothing matters—there is always another alternate reality that is almost exactly the same.

As Alpha Waymond recruits Evelyn to fight Jobu Tupaki, Evelyn’s world becomes a mind-boggling superhero-esque fantasy. Yet in that absurdity, Evelyn has more power to think and choose than ever before. When Alphaverse agents threaten her daughter’s life, Evelyn takes a stand. No. I’m doing this my own way. She hardly knew anything about multiverses or verse-jumping, yet Evelyn had all she

needed to know: her daughter is in danger, and she wants, needs, and chooses to save her.

Jobu Tupaki, a second-generation queer Chinese-American, and Evelyn, a Chinese immigrant mother, have something in common: a profound dissatisfaction with their lives—so profound it’s a growing internal malaise—yet they try desperately to hold themselves together. Throughout the film, they each grapple with their tense, sometimes inexplicable realities: of being lovable or unlovable; hopeful or hopeless; compassionate or bitter; boxed up or fantastically messy. They are a daughter and mother in a failing laundromat. A kung fu apprentice and a master.

A jailer and a convict. Two characters in a child’s doodle. Pinatas spilling candy on the ground.

“I’m tired,” Joy says to Evelyn. “I don’t want to hurt anymore and for some reason when I’m with you it just hurts the both of us.”

This movie threw me into sobs the first time I watched it with my mother. A cultural connection to the movie’s premise isn’t necessary; it hits the existential core of every human being.

How do you reconcile with your regrets? How do you find stillness in the world’s ever-present noise? How do you protect the meaning in places that seem to have none? How do we heal generational trauma?

What does sacrificial love look like? These are all questions *Everything Everywhere All At Once* seeks to address. But above all, the film emphasizes kindness. Kindness to yourself and to others.

“Of all places I could be, I just want to be here with you,” says Evelyn to Joy/Jobu Tupaki. Their embrace comes together as a collision of apples, of googly-eyed boulders, of larger and smaller planets. It’s something cosmic and all-powerful. An intimate beauty. Because this film is also about family—the balance of messiness, fierceness, healing, and forgiveness.



Courtesy of IMDb

By **CHENGYUEZHANG** '24

*Spoiler Alert...*

On my plane ride back to the United States this August, I watched the movie *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. I curled up in my seat and didn’t bother wiping away the tears streaming down my face and dampening my mask. This film artfully captured the nature of a relationship between a mother and a daughter with its weird erotic moments, hurt, and attachments.

Evelyn Wang is a first generation immigrant running a laundromat with her husband Waymond. She is already struggling to keep up with her daily troubles. Then Alpha Waymond — that Way-

mond from the alternate Alphaverse— shows up. Somehow the fate of the infinite universe now lies on her shoulders. Somehow, as the worst version of herself in all the possible multiverses, only she can defeat villain Joy/Jobu Tupaki, her daughter from Alphaverse. Evelyn had pushed Joy into hyperawareness-induced insanity.

We the viewer are never given a chronological narrative tracing all the past conflicts between Evelyn and Joy. The chaos compounds when Jobu Tupaki’s appearances are marked with extravagant, sparkly make-ups and surreal costumes. Everything about her screams chaos, craze, absurdity, and danger. Jobu Tupaki kills and flirts: “If you really put everything on

a bagel it becomes this—the truth...Nothing matters.”

The mother and daughter travel the world. They are two broken piñatas hanging beside each others’ spilt candies. They are two stones next to each other on a cliff in the valleys. They are escaped prisoner and jailor, they are mother and daughter pulling at each other’s hair, they are chasing and laughing. “I am your daughter, Evelyn. Your daughter is me,” Jobu Tupaki says.

The screen flashes through all the multiverses. All the random multiverses that Evelyn had jumped into make a comeback and are shown to go towards a happy ending. As the moment builds, Evelyn confronts her father, introducing

him to Joy’s girlfriend. And then, things do not work out.

“This is all just a pointless swirling bucket of bullshit, Evelyn. The bagel is where we finally find peace.”

“Stop calling me Evelyn. I. Am. Your. Mother.”

“Stay back! Please! Just stop!”

The loud music that is building up comes to an abrupt end. Joy storms into the empty parking lot, and Evelyn follows right behind. Such a story, absurd in every way, is tethered down to reality by a genius moment. Joy says “Mom, just stop.” “I’m tired.” “Just let me go.”

However one would wish to make sense of their life and to wrap up their life in a little bow

tie, it doesn’t work. Especially if you are still living your life, the struggle and pain that you are experiencing do not go away magically in a climatic moment like in stories. Even if your logic tells you you will be fine, and things will work out, your senses just keep telling you it hurts and hurts and hurts. At that moment the pain seems to never stop. This scene leaves the space for these emotions.

“Okay.”

“Out of all the places I could be, why would I want to be here with you? It doesn’t make sense,” Evelyn says. Mothers are never required to be there for their children. They are human, and they have a choice.

“Maybe there is something out there. Some-

thing that explains why you are still looking for me after all this time.” Evelyn says. Despite calling her mother by first name throughout, Jobu Tupaki is but a child.

“You can do anything anywhere. Why not go somewhere where your daughter is more than this... This.” Joy says. It’s clear that no matter how independent and powerful Joy may be on the outside, she still yearns for Evelyn’s understanding, comfort, and approval.

And here Evelyn has a choice. She chooses to recognize her bond with her daughter, but also that the two of them are ultimately leading separate lives. They are both full human beings, so much more than the roles they play. They need to let go.

## TV Show Review: *The Boys*

By **MAX MANTEL**

Where once the idea of a new Batman movie, Spiderman cartoon, or Avengers team-up seemed fresh and exciting, recent superhero movies have been slipping, turning the genre into low-stakes reprisals of CGI action climaxes.

A show like *The Boys* thus stands out. Created by Amazon Prime Video, this rather bloody series follows a ragtag group of semi-terrorists (it’s complicated) as they seek to bring justice to the people who are supposed to save the world.

Despite being a show about superpowers, the main focus is on ordinary

people. We start the show with Hughie, a relatively drab young guy who “still lives in the same bedroom he grew up in.” Hughie’s life takes a turn for the worse when his girlfriend Robin is popped into jelly by super-speedster “A-Train,” one of the most powerful super men, in the entire world. A-Train’s connections and money keep him in the clear, and Hughie has to live the remainder of his life keeping quiet. That is, until “CIA Agent” Billy Butcher struts in.

Butcher offers Hughie a chance for revenge. However, after the “supes” catch onto their plans, Butcher, Hughie, and the rest of their

team find themselves at the center of a nationwide conspiracy and duck hunt.

The show’s strongest asset has always been its writing. Against all odds— an almost cringe-worthy amount of edge and unhealthy dosage of gore— the script delivers heart and life into the show. So much happens in each episode that without a strong script the show very well could get lost in its ambition. One of its strong suits are the set-ups and payoffs: the show knows how to deliver on what it has promised, and introduces enough new leads and plot points in each episode to keep viewers hooked.

Another strength of the show is the characters: each feels like a consistent presence that constantly adds value to the story. The characters themselves are also consistent; their developments and actions informed by their histories but also delightfully unexpected. Take Hughie and Butcher: though they often snark at one another, they clearly have a deeper, brotherly bond and are there for each other. These heroes also play off well against the show’s central antagonist, Homelander, who you might imagine as an amalgamation of Superman and Captain America. Homelander may be evil, but he also inspires

sympathy, which perhaps makes him even more terrifying. This most well-known and feared supe was created from a test tube, and engineered to be a product, ever monitored by the wealthy elite. His mental deterioration throughout the show is a real highlight. Between the supes and “the boys,” each conflict packs weight, and also carries a heavy amount of emotion.

The real tragedy of the world of *The Boys* is that it mimics our own world. Superheroes get away with murder and assault thanks to their status and corporate backing. And aren’t people in power also guilty of these sins? Casual corporate racism

and malpractice are on full display in *The Boys*. Homelander himself sounds like a real-life politician when addressing his adoring fans, and his marketing messages are built on saving “traditional America.” The show isn’t subtle, but it isn’t trying to be: its parody and open mockery convey much more than assumed jabs ever would.

The show is a lot to get through but is worth it at the end of the day. With the amount of content prepared (season four and a spin-off), I trust that *The Boys* will be diabolical enough to put its mouth where its mouth is.

## Op-Ed

## » VIETNAM

Read about Nhan Phan '24's summer travels in Vietnam, 9.

## » LIZ TRUSS

Read Andrew Yuan '24's defense of Liz Truss, the newly elected United Kingdom Prime Minister.

## » FEMINISM

Read as Sophia Lee '24 redefines feminism in the media, 11.

# My Story With Roe

By SOPHIE MA '24

*Content Warning: This article involves references to sexual assault and misconduct. The Academy lists a number of resources on <https://www.exeter.edu/about-us/our-commitment-safety>. If helpful, please seek confidential help at the National Sexual Assault Hotline at +1 (800) 656-4673, HAVEN 24/7 hotline at +1 (603) 994-SAFE (7233), or Counseling and Psychological Services through the Lamont Health and Wellness Center: +1 (603) 777-3420.*

Over the summer, while attending workshops held by Planned Parenthood, coordinators encouraged us to write to local newspapers and publications about abortion. Enthusiastically, they told attendees that each of us has a story related to abortion, even if we have never personally had one ourselves. I wanted to agree, but at the same time, I felt like the exception: I had no story or experience with abortion to justify why I felt so strongly about protecting Roe. I do not know anyone close to me who has had an abortion, I have personally never needed an abortion, and I seemingly had no compelling or moving personal story I could tell to tug on someone else's heartstrings.

Despite this, my feelings for the issue are rooted deeply within me, and as I'm writing this piece, I realize I do have a story after all. I want to preface this by saying that the purpose of this opinion piece is not to inform anyone about a specific methodology that lawmakers and politicians should follow to redeem the current state of the United States. Instead, I want to tell a story. I hope that regardless of your stance on abortion, you will read what I have to share.

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My story began before I was born.

In the early 2000s, my mother lived in Beijing and worked day and night on interior design construction

projects for her company. She was approaching her 30s at the time and living the best years of her life. When I look at pictures of her back then, I am in awe of the beautiful, vibrant, and impeccably styled woman I see (she was a former fashion student). At the same time, I feel a flurry of mixed emotions: pride for having a mother like her, disbelief from being reminded that my parent was once young like me, and perhaps most importantly, shuffled between those feelings, I feel a slight pang of guilt to have taken that life away from her.

I am the direct product of society's patriarchal thinking, of the old notion that women should marry and have children before they are old and undesirable. Had my grandparents not pressured my mother to marry and have a child, I wonder where I would be today. Would my mother have chosen this route herself?

Because of my family's incessant nagging, my mother got married when she was nearly 30 and had me the same year she wed my father. After she gave birth to me, she spent less and less time on her own endeavors until she stopped working entirely, leaving my father as the sole breadwinner of our family. Her identity shifted from the young, carefree, and independent woman she used to be into that of a full-time parent; instead of living for her own hopes and dreams, she worried more and more about what was best for me.

My mom is not alone in her experiences. The expectation of parenthood is forced upon many people in the world, sometimes subtly, sometimes violently. Although my mother has made it extremely clear that she loves me and has never regretted having me, I can't help but ache for everything my existence has cost. More than anything, I just want my mother to be happy, and if aborting me would have granted that, then I would much rather she chose her happiness over my life.

I have told these things to my mom before. Each time,

she has shut me down and firmly reassured me that I am the best thing to have happened to her. When she tells me she loves me, I know for certain that she means it, but not every kid can say the same. To exist knowing you were unwanted and to be unable to experience the full extent of a parent's love is arguably a worse fate for a child.

Although my mother ended up happy, somewhere in the world, there is a person who married and gave birth out of societal pressure and deeply resents their child. Somewhere, there is a person who is still a kid themselves and has never fathomed the trauma of childbirth and pregnancy. There is a person whose pregnancy induces miserable feelings of gender dysphoria. There is a person who had their contraceptives tampered with. There is a person who simply doesn't want a child and is happy living for themselves. Why should any of them be forced to go through the traumatizing ordeals of pregnancy and childbirth?

Parenthood is hard. My mother's story—and the story of my childhood—have shown me that. My mom made sacrifice after sacrifice in her career, personal life, and health to ensure I had a happy childhood. When I was six years old, my mom threw away her life in China and enrolled in community college in the United States—something she continued to do for the next nine years—so we could obtain a visa when a green card wasn't possible. While my dad worked in China, my mother raised me alone, all the while balancing classes in a language she did not speak. I have seen her worn down to a breaking point, I have seen her cry, and I have been her shoulder when she had no one else. I have seen firsthand how hard parenthood can be. So when I think of a world where parenthood isn't a choice, I am scared.

My story continues when last year, a mere week into my first term at the Academy, Nancy Jo Sales released her *Vanity Fair* article. I remem-

ber receiving the email from Principal Rawson on my way back to the dorm ("I am writing today to address issues raised in an article published in *Vanity Fair* and to provide information about the process we follow each time..."), opening the article, and making it halfway through the horrific stories Sales recounted before I stopped reading. I felt nauseous. I couldn't make it back into my dorm before I collapsed on the red plastic lawn chair outside Bancroft and called my mother, distressed and crying, while I grappled with what I had just read.

I finished the article later that day, in the quiet of my dorm room, still a little nauseous and filled with sadness for the traumatic things people have experienced in the hands of their assaulter (and then throughout the reporting process at the Academy). In the weeks and months to come, in between protests, a wider campus conversation about rape culture, and vigorous efforts from student leaders to change the culture and response around sexual assault, an occasional thought would come into my mind: if something awful like that does happen, at least I can get an abortion.

It wasn't much comfort, especially considering that sexual assault doesn't necessarily lead to pregnancy, and that even if I could get an abortion, it still wouldn't erase the trauma of the ordeal. However, to think about being forced into pregnancy and having my rapist's baby on top of being sexually assaulted was far more horrifying, so I clung to the minuscule reassurance that I would always have access to abortion.

Eight months later, I opened another news article to find out that the Supreme Court planned to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. The little comfort I had from Roe's protection was shattered, opening the doors to a new terrifying reality: a reality where one assault, one mistake, one unfortunate situation could leave me with no way to free myself from my own body. Once again, I

called my mom and cried.

The overturning of *Roe v. Wade* not only foreshadows an ominous future for all uterus-havers in the United States but also threatens same-sex marriage, interracial marriage, and access to contraceptive devices. The right to privacy—which sets the basis for *Roe v. Wade*—is not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution, but it's something that's been codified in decisions over and over again for the last several decades through the due process clause in the fifth and 14th amendments. That very same right to privacy is the basis for many other rights, such as the right to decide aspects of your child's education, as well as the right to contraceptives and same-sex and interracial marriage. In undoing Roe, the door opens to a series of problematic possibilities threatening everyone's personal autonomy, not just women and people with uteruses.

Driving this point home, Justice Clarence Thomas—one of the five Supreme Court Justices that voted to overturn *Roe v. Wade*—has already said that other rulings similar to Roe, including those around same-sex marriage and the right for couples to use contraception, should be reconsidered as none are directly stated as rights by the Constitution (POLITICO 2022). Although the Respect for Marriage Act (which protects same-sex marriage) has passed in the House of Representatives as of July 2022, its fate in the Senate remains unclear. From the precedent that overturning Roe has set, however, I have bleak expectations for its future and the future of the United States.

As a young queer woman of color, I am scared that everything I know will crumble. I am afraid that one day, I will be on my way back to the dorm and open an article telling me I cannot marry the person I love because of their gender. I'm terrified that I will come out of class one day and find out that I will no longer have access to contraceptives, which protect me from more than just pregnancy but also life-altering diseases and are

commonly used to regulate menstrual issues. If the Supreme Court could overturn Roe nearly 50 years after its decision, then no precedent or right is truly out of the question, and that alone terrifies me. If decades of progress can be erased in a fraction of that time, what else is to come?

The actual issue does not lie in whether or not my mom, someone else, or myself receives or doesn't receive an abortion. It lies in the freedom of choice and the violence of forced birth, as well as the implications of the Supreme Court taking away a right because it isn't explicitly written in the Constitution. After I called my mom the day the draft leaks came out, she listened to me cry and reassured me that if worse came to worse, we could always go back to China for an abortion. Although this relieved a small portion of my anxiety, it also highlights an important issue: Roe being overturned impacts low-income and minority populations the most. Criminalizing abortion isn't stopping abortion completely; it's simply removing access from underprivileged communities. Wealthy people and people with access to resources will still be able to work around these obstructions, while people in poverty—especially people of color—are left to reconcile with the worst of the issue.

At the end of the day, abortion bans are not black and white. They do not just impact childbirth, and overturning Roe has implications beyond simply the matter at hand. To many people, parenthood is a beautiful gift, but that is not the case for everyone. Individual belief should not be the reason for dictating other people's bodies. Instead of considering the loss of a potential life, consider the pain that real people like me feel right now. We are living, breathing humans with people to love and dreams to fulfill. When you criminalize abortion access, you are not saving the "lives" of unborn fetuses but hurting masses of communities and people like you and me.

# Pro-Choice and Pro-Dobbs

By JOONYOUNG HEO '25

Absurd though it may seem, I find myself in favor of "pro-choice" rhetoric and, at the same time, in favor of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*.

Popular dogma says that is quite impossible. It cannot be that an individual who supports the right to abortion should also support the landmark Supreme Court decision that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, which granted such a right under the Constitution. I consider it perfectly logical.

With so much controversy at hand, I would hate to be misconstrued. To be explicit, I believe in the right to abortion—that a woman should be able to control her own body, at least until a certain point in pregnancy. I believe in several other arguments: that an unwilling mother might birth a child who will be neglected and maltreated, that legalizing abortion is the best way to make it safe and affordable for women of lower socioeconomic groups, and so on.

Those are all fair arguments. But they are rendered equally irrelevant to this article by the fact that the Supreme Court is a judicial body.

*Roe v. Wade*, it follows, is not "pro-choice." It was a ruling from the Court, and any such ruling is neither a political statement nor a moral endorse-

ment. The justices were certainly not advancing that the benefits of legalizing abortion outweigh the costs. It was, as all cases under the Court are meant to be, a matter-of-fact interpretation of the American Constitution. When the justices in 1973 issued a 7-2 decision in *Roe*, they merely found that the document grants to the American people the right to abortion. Morality or practicality, or any other factor for which pro-choice advocates clamor today, were not concerned in the slightest.

To the same extent, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* is not "pro-life." The ultimate 6-3 decision does not amount to a ruling that the state should control a woman's body, and it seems to me an injustice to impulsively attribute such a notion to the Court. They ruled only that the Constitution does not safeguard the right to abortion.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh put it well in his concurring opinion: "The issue before this Court . . . is not the policy or morality of abortion. The issue before this Court is what the Constitution says about abortion."

Having made this distinction, supporting *Dobbs* is not a question of pro-choice or pro-life; rather, it comes down to a dispassionate appraisal of the Court's dispassionate interpretation. Personally, I find

the majority decision in *Dobbs* convincing.

*Roe* was rooted in the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment that guarantees a right to "privacy." The Court concluded that this right fundamentally protects the more specific right to abortion. To balance competing state interests of preserving a woman's health and "protecting prenatal life," the Court created a pregnancy trimester system to determine the point in time at which the "viability" of potential life outweighs the mother's autonomy.

Conversely, in the Court's opinion in *Dobbs*, Justice Samuel Alito writes that *Roe* was "egregiously wrong" and "exceptionally weak." The particular consideration of potential life, he argues, excludes the right to abortion from the broader right to privacy guaranteed by the Due Process Clause. That a human life is invariably tied to abortion, in other words, makes it a special case. Nowhere else in the Constitution does it outline this right, either.

The Court recognizes that the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees "some rights that are not mentioned in the Constitution," of course. But these rights must be "deeply rooted in [our] history and tradition," a principle established in *Washington v. Glucksberg*, and Alito finds no historical prece-

dent in a search that stretches all the way to 13th-century English doctrine.

Notably, Alito was not using the absence of historical precedent to justify the Court's decision in *Dobbs*, as many pro-choice advocates claimed the moment his opinion was leaked. He was merely proving that the right to abortion is not "deeply rooted" in history. It's a very common practice in Court rulings; Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, to give one recent example, cited the *Magnum Carta* in the Court's main opinion in *Timbs v. Indiana*. And since the right to abortion was "entirely unknown in American law" until the late 20th century, Alito concludes, it cannot be an unenumerated right implicit in the Constitution.

The Court committed a further offense in *Roe* by creating a pregnancy trimester system. No such "veritable code" is even alluded to in the Constitution. The kind of policymaking that might produce a trimester system out of thin air belongs to the legislative branch, not our courts of law. The government is divided into three branches for a reason.

Finding that the Constitution neither grants nor proscribes the right to abortion, then, the Court's 6-3 ruling takes the middle ground. The power to decide the legality of abortion is now returned to

the state level, or "to the people and their elected representatives."

Of course, any individual—assuming he or she has read *Roe* and *Dobbs*—can disagree with the Court's majority ruling. It is called an opinion, after all, and three justices (Breyer, Kagan, Sotomayor) did write in dissent. I happen to side with the ruling. But whichever way you lean, a personal verdict on both *Roe* and *Dobbs* can exist only as an interpretation of the Constitution.

It is certainly true that justices are men and women with experiences and interests of their own. To see them as entirely disinterested and concerned exclusively with the law is a step too far. Indeed, as a historical example, the Supreme Court frequently abused the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause to protect big corporations at the turn of the 20th century. Justice Samuel Miller himself spoke of the Court in 1875 as "the advocates for forty years of railroad companies, and all forms of associated capital."

Yet the natural predispositions of our kind do not give the public an easy way out. We are not empowered by the mere possibility of bias to denigrate a Court ruling as the work of political puppets or the self-serving elite. The sitting justices may be Demo-

crat or Republican, pro-choice or pro-life, but our obligation to presume the rational integrity of their decision endures. Perhaps, if we have tried and failed to read it as a reasonable interpretation of the Constitution, if we are left confounded by its absurdity—then we might look to those other considerations that may have clouded the Court's judgment. But in the case of *Dobbs*, I do believe that both sides of the debate can appreciate the quality of its legal argument.

The news today delivers report after report of arrests and prosecutions as the law enforces a streak of anti-abortion regulations in many states. I suspect they will build in quantity. Yet if something must be blamed, it is the legislative body—the system that does take into account morality and practicality and popularity and all the rest. The Supreme Court has no business dealing with these factors. Its purview rests entirely on the Constitution, and the justices have the cardinal duty of ensuring that it remains so, whatever the ramifications.

As Alito writes, the Court "cannot allow our decisions to be affected by any extraneous influences such as concern about the public's reaction to our work." The legitimacy of *Roe* and *Dobbs* is thus far removed from the rift that divides pro-choice and pro-life.



# Lessons from The Vietnamese Narrative

By NHAN PHAN '24

*Disclaimer: Learning at an international school for most of my life, I never really had a strong understanding of how Vietnamese people perceived the Vietnamese story. Perhaps the version of that story that's being taught in Vietnamese schools differs from the perspectives taught internationally, but nonetheless, I wanted to explore more.*

This summer, I embarked on a Vietnamese nationwide summer excursion that spanned seven cities, over several hundred kilometers, and one and a half months. This trip was part of a bigger project that was two years in the making: a podcast that explored the evolution of Vietnamese heritage culture from the viewpoint of historical relics scattered throughout the country. Whether it was a tour through the famous Buôn Mê Thuật Exile House, a three-day moped excursion in Lào Cai to the top of Fansipan mountain, a teaching experience at a highland center in Sapa, or an overnight train ride to Quy Nhơn, the stories I unearthed from these experiences provided me with several important takeaways about my home country and how it is changing on an everyday basis.

1: The role that wartime conditions had on the formation of *Vietnamese ideology*

I had the chance to interview Mr. Phan Biền, who went through 39 years of war with the French, Americans, and smaller auxiliary forces after 1975. He said, "In order to really fully appreciate the conditions you are born into today, you have to spend a day in the war and witness the sacrifice of hundreds of people who came before you." The following section is an abbreviated account of a soldier's experience that resonates with the Vietnamese people today.

Mr. Biền, as mentioned earlier, was among some of the most influential people within the Vietnamese army; he rose through the ranks throughout his time in the military. During the war, he described his experience on the battleground: "On my foot is a long scar that's still healing. It is commemorative of when I was in the Trường Sơn battleground. The enemy directly stabbed my leg using their field weaponry.

This was during French rule. I evaded the enemy forces while injured, hiding in a nearby trench... On my head, I have a scar from the American war. It was from a B52, a destructive weapon used by the Americans, that just missed my head. When I was sleeping, the enemy forces dropped a B52 bomb and the shards grazed my head... At Trường Sơn, I used to joke with my regiment: 'If we don't die from bombs or bullets from the enemy, we will die from everything else.' Everything else consisted of natural disasters, disease, and hunger. You must be able to truly understand hardship in order to appreciate how valuable today's life really is."

Biền then talked about the Liberation of Saigon and described it as something that is one-of-a-kind. According to him, the event was something that did not happen often—that a country and its people came together. He gave several other examples that illustrated his point. In the past, three major countries were divided into two separate regions: Germany was divided into East and West Germany, Korea was divided into North and South Korea, and Vietnam was divided into North and South Vietnam. In 1975, after the liberation of the South from the American forces, Vietnam was reunified into one country. Germany was reunified only as a result of the Unification Treaty and the two halves of Korea are still separated today. Vietnam, perhaps, reunited on its own.

As decades passed after the Liberation of Saigon, the country entered a new era called the "Đổi Mới" movement, which shifted the country's approach to structuring its economy. Before the movement, Vietnam was embroiled in American economic sanctions which plunged the country into an age of poverty and misery. The poor were poorer and, thus, increased their gap with the rich. Rural populations, mainly dependent on the export of farmed goods, could not sell their produce. Many people living in urban cities were devoid of jobs. The State, seeing rising inequality between rural and urban populations and areas and economic deterioration, decided to shift from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented one; this was the core of the Đổi Mới movement. With this movement came a sharp rise in private ownership of businesses, gross domestic prod-



Bắc Hà Market, Lào Cai

Nhan Phan / *The Exonian*

uct per capita, as well as rapid transformation and modernization of Vietnamese tourism and culture. It was also the catalyst for the formation of today's Vietnamese economy and society.

The sacrifices of the men and women on the battlefield and the hardships that the Vietnamese people of previous generations experienced formed the foundation of Vietnamese values. With independence, economic reforms, and guidance from the State, Vietnamese society was vastly transformed. This is the Vietnamese Narrative that senior generations of Vietnamese people remember. This is the narrative that they understand well. This is the narrative that is ingrained in their minds in the decades after the war. This is the version of Vietnamese history that I discovered as I traveled along the country—that Vietnam rose up from its hardships and emerged stronger and better than ever. Understanding the progression of Vietnamese history from the eyes of the Vietnamese people can reveal a picture of how the ideology of the Vietnamese narrative came to be.

2: The fluidity of change, intersectionality between "old" versus "new"

After 1975's Liberation of the South, Vietnam evolved from a poor, war-ridden country in Southeast Asia into a modern, independent developing nation. The change he witnessed after the liberation of the South is astounding—Vietnam, according to him, transformed into an economic powerhouse in Southeast Asia as well as a source of global cultural influence. However, that narrative

of change is nothing new. What I was interested to investigate was the intersection between the intergenerational perceptions of Vietnamese society. Where do the "old ways" and the "new ways" intersect? What do everyday people think about this change? Was this change inevitable?

I wanted to bring up a specific example that I investigated while on my trip to Buôn Mê Thuật, a city in the Central Vietnamese province of Đắk Lắk. I was investigating the effects of urbanization on the traditional stilt house culture of the Ê Đê people living in the area. Stilt houses, structures elevated above the ground, have been used by the traditional Ê Đê people for centuries. I went to three villages, or Buôn, as they are called in Vietnamese: Buôn Buôn, Buôn Kuốp, and Buôn Akô Đông. Three of these villages are all within the same central Vietnamese area and are all in Dak Lak province; however, they are all very different. Geographically, Kuốp village is the furthest from the central city and is the most remote of the three, Buôn village is near a major highway that links it to the Buôn Mê Thuật, whereas Akô Đông village is within the heart of Buôn Mê Thuật. These three villages also have several other fundamental differences: Kuốp village is relatively small—the majority of it is farmland—with a couple of hundred residents mostly living in traditional stilt houses. Buôn village, rumored to be where the stilt house concentration was once the densest, is the biggest of the three villages with the majority of its residents now living in modern brick houses. Akô Đông village, occu-

pying only a small area of land in the center of Buôn Mê Thuật City, is perhaps best known for tourism.

Here are some of the observations I made from visiting the three villages:

Geographically, a trend can be noticed based on the location of the villages in Buôn Mê Thuật. The further away a village is from the city or a major highway/transportation route, the less likely that they will have access to quality services and education as well as higher-paying job opportunities. This correlates with the concentration of stilt houses and farmland distribution: Kuốp village, the most remote, is most reliant on agriculture. The further away a village is from the major city, the more concentrated the stilt houses will be because the households have less income available to switch to more modern houses. In more remote villages, because of a lack of access to higher paying jobs, more households depend on farming for income as well as sustenance; this explains the larger designation of land for farming in Kuốp village compared to the other two villages.

When talking to a family who lived in a stilt house in Kuốp village, a particular quote from one of the family members gave rise to another trend that I deduced in this investigation: "Bây giờ người dân mình có tiền thì mới xây nhà mà có tiền đầu mà xây nhà (I wish if only our people have money, we can build proper houses, but we don't have that kind of money anyways)." As more traditional households have more income, they are actively choosing to move into modern

houses. They make this choice because modern society apparently is telling them that their way of life is inherently outdated. This viewpoint reflects the effect of urbanization; as conditions improve, it renders traditional ways of living inadequate as it shows that there are better, more comfortable ways to live. However, it is worth noting that some households insist on living in stilt houses because they feel like it is imperative to maintain the traditional way of living. A particular quote from a resident in Buor village states, "Cô vẫn sống trong nhà sàn vì đó là truyền thống, không thể nào mà cứ thế mà bỏ đi được. Hàng trăm thế hệ trước sống như thế này, mình phải tiếp tục truyền thống của họ. (I still live in a stilt house because I simply have to, I can't just leave. Hundreds of past generations lived like this, and I have to continue their tradition)."

Another, more emotional, example of the cultural change that local Vietnamese people experienced is the Saigon Post Office: one of the most famous building works in Saigon, carrying significant historical meaning and evidence of the development of Saigon urban society into Western models of urbanity (more specifically French). Though its original post office function remains the same, to Saigon locals, it has been transformed into something that is not previously known: a commercial, tourist destination. But to me, what is interesting about this case study is whether or not Saigoneers embrace "the new ways." From the conversations I had with locals, it seems as

## 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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# Lessons from The Vietnamese Narrative Cont.

if they notice this change as something that is inevitable as Vietnamese society progresses. But part of them longs for the return of the “old ways.”

One example of the locals’ longingness for the “old ways” can be found in the perspective of food vendors near the post office. Several decades ago, according to many vendors, food carts filled the square in between the post office and the Saigon Notre Dame cathedral; it was a popular destination for locals to hang out. There were carts, tables and chairs, and mini kitchen trolleys set up along the pavement outside the post office and the square. The vendors, Saigon natives, reminisced about seeing the post office when they were younger and when many people would come in and out of the building with packages, letters, newspapers, and other goods. They remembered this square as a busy marketplace of books, letters, and works of literature, as well as snacks, drinks, and local favorites. The post office is an integral part of the soul of Saigon. Perhaps, the post office was so special to the people because it once truly belonged to them. With the widespread development in Saigon after the millennium came a facade that prevented the city from being its true self: the construction of a more polished everyday reality that didn’t feel like it was something that spoke to the soul of Saigon. It was, more well put, a second identity. Renovated, reconstructed historical sites, modernized roads, tourist attractions, is it really the Saigon they knew before?

Locals who had lived

here their entire life speak to this change with a mix of disappointment and optimism. There will always be intersections between perceptions of locals: some favor the modernization of the city, yet some yearn for the return to traditions and the “ways before.” It is this longingness for the return of something that felt personal—a longingness for nostalgia, for the “old ways” to be the “new ways.” Saigon is a fascinating case study because to the locals who live here, the city is more than just a city: it’s a living entity. A living part within the soul of every Saigoneer. Though everyone knows change is inevitable, is it too much to ask for the post office to belong to Saigon once again?

These two examples, along with many others, showcase the spectrum in which the “old ways” and “new ways” intersect in Vietnamese society. The example of the diminishing stilt house concentration in Buôn Mê Thuột is showing the gradual replacement as the traditional Ê Đê people grapple with their traditional way of living versus the temptation of transitioning to more modern ways of living. The example of the Saigon Post Office shows how Saigon locals have a longingness for the return of tradition, for the “old ways” to become the “new ways.” These examples reflect how many different Vietnamese people regard the transformation that is taking place both on a local and national scale, they show how fluid change really is.

### 3: Empathy

Sometimes, I do feel like a stranger in my own

home in the sense that I am seemingly so unaware of what’s going on in my country, unaware of the progression in its cultural development, and unaware of Vietnamese storytelling. Perhaps, before I continue with this section, I would like to acknowledge that I come from a very privileged background that has provided me with the chance to travel, write, record, and produce this summer-long project. In fact, it is because I am privileged that I get the chance to learn, play, and spend time with you today in Exeter. Not many Vietnamese families can afford to send their children halfway around the world to learn at such a high-quality institution as Exeter; for that, I am ever so grateful. The purpose of my project was never to regard the communities around me in a way that reflects a power dynamic that is frankly toxic and dehumanizing, or to “stoop down to their level,” but instead a genuine effort to understand the feelings, emotions, and circumstances of communities I have not necessarily paid much attention to before. I placed a heavy emphasis on storytelling from a place of empathy and not pity. Empathy.

Empathy is such an important word in a world that doesn’t necessarily appreciate it enough. Empathy, according to the Oxford Dictionary, means “the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.” It is *not* sympathy, which means feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else’s misfortune. What was important for me during this project is to ensure that I am following the former and

never the latter. By practicing sympathy, I am intentionally, negatively enforcing a judgment on the people whom I have met and the stories I have heard; it would mean using my personal position to form a negative (or inferior) impression of their stories.

I met a family near the Ham Ninh fishing village in Phu Quoc while walking on the wreckage of the pier bridge in the area. The household consisted of a husband and wife and their three children. The husband is a fisherman in the area and the wife is a vendor at the local market. I met them as the husband was unloading the fishing net from his boat early in the morning; the family gathered together for an early morning meal and invited me to join them. Their small house at the edge of the island overlooked the Ham Ninh coast, which is more desolate now than it was a decade ago. The sun was just rising from the horizon as they sat together around a metal circular tray and ate. I was privileged enough to be able to hear and share their story: “nhà cô thì nghèo. Ông thì đi đánh cá mà có bán được bao nhiêu đâu, mà nhà thì cũng không có gì. Ba đứa con của cô thì cô cho đi học ngay gần đây, được giảm giá vì là hộ nghèo ấy. Sáng sớm thì ông về ăn rồi chờ mấy đứa đi học rồi ông sáng sớm hôm sau mới đánh cá xong rồi về. Có một hôm tàu của ông suýt nữa thì chìm; nếu mà chìm thì nhà cũng không biết phải làm gì nữa. Nhưng mà thôi, cả nhà bây giờ vẫn an toàn, vui vẻ. Mỗi người sẽ cố gắng học giỏi, kiếm tiền, vượt qua tất cả mọi chướng ngại

vật nhé! (Our family is poor. My husband catches fish but they don’t sell for much and our household barely has anything. Our three children go to a nearby school; we get a discount because we are a poor household. Early in the morning, my husband drops the kids off at school and goes fishing until early the next morning. Once, his boat almost sank and if it did, we wouldn’t know what to do. But nonetheless, our family is safe and happy. Everyone will try to study well, make money, and overcome every hardship!)” she exclaimed while looking at her children.

The last sentence resonated with me as well as the families I met after my stop in Phu Quoc. It showed me the optimism, the high-spiritedness, and the mental strength that rules over the Vietnamese people. What touched me was how they managed to turn any situation into a positive one and how they were content with their circumstances and proceeded with daily life with energy, zeal, and happiness. I appreciated that they invited me into their household to listen to their story and talk about my experiences too. By listening to their stories, their emotions, and their approach to life, I have been able to empathize with them not as a journalist interviewing a subject but as one Vietnamese citizen to another. We have developed a common bond, a common understanding of the Vietnamese spirit; that is something that I will treasure for the rest of my life. That common bond is the reason why I set out to investigate the Vietnamese Narrative in

the first place.

In summary, this summer of travel helped me form another perspective of Vietnamese society that is grounded in understanding the different experiences of people with different backgrounds. I managed to gain an insight into the nature of change within the Vietnamese story, understand the Vietnamese perspective on the country’s historical development, and appreciate the strong will and spirit of the Vietnamese people. As a Vietnamese native, I took an active step in understanding the intricacies of the communities around me; I would encourage you to explore the narrative upon which your identity is based. Whether it be a journey through your family’s history or a trip down memory lane to revisit your childhood, it can be a fulfilling process that will allow you to re-discover yourself. By embarking on my own personal journey to understand the country I grew up in through experiential travel, I developed a newfound passion to explore this aspect of my identity. The Vietnamese Narrative is a story of the values and heritage of the Vietnamese people. It is a story of cultural transformation fueled by modernization and lessons learned from history. It is a story of the Vietnamese image on the world stage. It is a case study of change, and of the balance between modernity and tradition. There is still so much left to see, and I’m only getting started.



Sapa, Lào Cai

Nhan Phan /The Exonian

## Defending Liz Truss: The Rise of an Underdog

By ANDREWYUAN '24

Iron fist, soft mind. Liz Truss fulfilled her ambitions to 10 Downing Street on Sept. 6 as she defeated fellow contender Rishi Sunak for Prime Minister in the United Kingdom. As Queen Elizabeth II’s death rocks Britain amid rising inflation and unprecedentedly high energy costs, Liz Truss’s opportunism and political acuteness could alleviate Britain’s present crisis.

As a caretaker Prime Minister, Truss’s goal is to stabilize her Conservative Party and consolidate her country, where her opportunism and shifting political philosophy come in handy.

Raised in a traditional middle class family, Truss started her political career as a Liberal Democrat devoted to centrist causes and policies. As a young politician, she fared well

among fellow moderates, presiding over the Oxford University Liberal Democrats and calling for the abolishment of the “disgraceful” monarchy in a(n) (in)famous speech to the 1994 National Liberal Democrats Conference.

Sometime between 1994 and 1996, Truss transformed from a fiery anti-monarchical rising political star to a conservative corporate accountant working for Shell due to unknown causes. Nonetheless, the political landscape of 1996 could provide a possible answer to Truss’s fundamental political shift: the governing Conservative government suffered landslide defeats in two consecutive local elections. Conservative Party’s eventual loss of its continuous 18-year majority in the 1997 general election provided momentum for conservatives to win back the Parliament, a platform for harsh criticisms of the failures of the

Labor Party, and an opportunity for Truss to ride the Conservative wave.

Her second notable political shift came during Britain’s 2016 European Union (E.U.) Referendum. Her crusade for the “Remain” abruptly ended when voters decided, by a slim margin, to leave E.U. Though she subsequently apologized for misidentifying, Truss’s firm defense of her sudden switch served her well on her rise to power following fellow Leave advocate Johnson’s landslide victory in 2019.

In the past, the new Prime Minister had masterfully navigated the complexities of global politics as a Cabinet Minister hawkish on fundamentals but compromising on mutual interests. As Secretary of Education, she adopted elements of Chinese STEM education, advocating for increased cooperation with Chinese teachers and corporations. Yet she insisted

on sanctioning Chinese officials diplomatically and economically over its human rights persecutions in Uyghur a few years later. Similarly, while calling for a closer alliance with Turkey economically, Truss continued to support Cyprus in its ongoing conflict against Turkish occupation.

Truss’s record speaks for her political wisdom: she’s a survivor and an underdog. She endured an extra-marital scandal in a patriarchal political system, two defeats early on in her career, and a demotion during her steady rise in the Cabinet. Even during the 2022 Conservative leadership election, she started as a distant third, barely qualifying for the Members’ vote. From this perspective, Truss indeed resembles her idol Margaret Thatcher.

The British public loathed former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s

deceit, mismanagement of government, and elitist bigotry. Truss’s underestimated political opportunism, pragmatic efficiency, and frugal lifestyle represent an antithesis to Johnson’s failures. Her willingness to change her political philosophy demonstrates that her policies would accommodate public opinions.

The evaluation of Truss’s competence drastically differs from the assessment of other Prime Ministers. Unlike other Prime Ministers who campaigned on promises and policies, Truss seems to have little to none. She didn’t have to win on an immaculate tax cut proposal or a miraculous plan to alleviate rising energy costs.

Truss’s ministership will likely be marked with diplomatic negotiations, compromises for economic relief, and clean-up of Johnson’s catastrophe. Yet thanks to her political

acumen, she might potentially build a legacy surpassing her predecessors, with ambitious tax-cut proposals and encouragement of business-led growth.

Truss cannot be simply categorized as a conservative or liberal, instead, her political maneuverings represent herself, her sufferance, and her rise to power. In a world recovering from the repercussions of radical populists such as Trump, Johnson, and Putin, Truss could tip global politics back to normalcy.

A formidable politician and effective lawmaker, Truss might just be the leader who listens, ponders, and changes whenever necessary or beneficial.

In the middle of a tsunami, an “Iron Weather Vane” might be the best to hope for.

# A Polarized Dead-End: *Roe v. Wade* in the 21st Century

By NATALYDELICID '24

Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and everyone in between, tend to lean different ways on a vast array of issues. Still, they all have one thing in common: everyone wants to see our country and its people prosper in a healthy dynamic. The only thing that differentiates us is our views on the best way to make that happen. With that in mind, our modern (emphasis on the word modern) country is built on this lovely notion of indisputable liberty and free speech; however, how we respond to the voices who exercise those rights (on either side of the spectrum) is the root cause of why folks on both ends of the spectrum are so miserably upset about the *Roe v. Wade* ruling, overturning, and the controversy surrounding it.

I believe that as a country, we're moving backward by shifting to

nearly complete polarization because of the closed minds in the pro-life and pro-choice movements that reflect ignorance on both sides of the spectrum. If the nation is genuinely motivated to work in the best interest of its citizens, women especially, efforts to reduce the focus on the extreme sides of the pro-life and pro-choice movements must be backed by all those who want to see the U.S. prosper.

A compromise should be made in which abortions are permitted nationwide, but the time in which a woman can receive an abortion should be limited to more widespread ethical standards, ideally at around 13-15 weeks, as 92.2% of abortions occur before or at 13 weeks (CDC 2021). This would be a reasonable solution as abortions after this period are more likely to be deemed unethical (FiveThirtyEight 2022) and pose greater risks to a woman's health.

Keep in mind that this is

all from a strategic standpoint; personally, I think it's nobody's damn business what people do with their bodies at any point in time. Yet, I would be optimistic to think that my exact opinion would be represented in the legislature across partisan lines. A beautiful and wise concoction of the wants of American citizens should be heard, and frankly, polls find that people don't want *Roe v. Wade* overturned—they just want it codified (NPR 2019). Many of us seemed to have missed the classroom discussion on the importance of teamwork in elementary school P.E., but we must relearn it now.

Oklahoma lawmakers passed multiple restrictive abortion bills this year, including one that prohibits abortions after six weeks of initial conception and another that considers the act of performing an abortion a felony. Many lawmakers seem to find pride in abortion bans and perceive this

new bill as a step towards having “the genocide of unborn babies ended in America,” as Rep. Todd Russ, a Republican Oklahoma state legislator, told reporters. According to a poll done by NPR, 75 percent of Americans would like to keep the Supreme Court ruling of *Roe v. Wade* to remain in effect. However, a majority would also like to see more restrictions on abortions. This shows that lawmakers are not truly reflecting the voices of the American people—rather, they are passing such bills in attempts to appeal to their predominantly right-leaning populations. This silences the voices of women who need access to healthcare constitutional rights as well as families and single mothers from low-income backgrounds who cannot realistically carry on a full-term pregnancy without drastic consequences.

Both pro-lifers and pro-choicers have solid arguments, as well as obvious flaws in them. For ex-

ample, an issue particularly prevalent in the pro-life argument is that they emphasize the birth of the child over its life, barely advocating for better standards in adoption homes/centers, public school lunches, gun violence mitigation, and widespread access to psychological treatment for abused children. To move forward with any abortion restrictions, the standards by which children live need to improve; no more kids should be put through traumatic/unhealthy experiences.

Additionally, an argumentative issue in the pro-choice movement includes the phrases used to back its movement up, such as “my body, my choice” and “it's just a blob of cells,” which are ultimately pointless and insensitive because regardless of whether or not that someone's opinion, different interpretations of what they mean to people won't change through their constant regurgitation.

In a country so evenly divided on abortion rights, I believe *Roe v. Wade* should remain intact, but lawmakers and citizens must wipe off their “pro-choice” and “pro-life” slates and listen because, in the end, one side will not win; there will always be grievances from the “losing” one. There is still hope for a moderate resolution that will satisfy most citizens in this nation, but that can never be accomplished unless Americans empathize with each other rather than antagonize. Before you shut someone down, just listen to them. You have a lot to learn from each other, and your contribution to a healthy conversation is a gateway to progress.

## Do Not Trust the Feminism in Media

By SOPHIA LEE '24

Click on Youtube to find female pop stars' performances, and you'll see that most of the time, their legs are fully shown, with their bodies squeezed into tight, swimsuit-like outfits. The comments either slut-shame or sexualize the women. Turn to a video of a male performer, and they're likely wearing much simpler outfits. Maybe even just jeans and a t-shirt. And they don't get nearly as much criticism for the way they dress on stage.

When we think of successful female pop stars, many of them heavily sexualize not only themselves, but also their music. To name just a few examples, Cardi B's release of *WAP* in 2020 was wildly celebrated as a feminist anthem. Before that, Nicki Minaj was worshiped as a notorious sex symbol in hip hop. I argue that

such happenings are not because they're empowering or “feminist,” but because they're profitable.

Just to clarify, I'm not shaming Cardi, Nicki, or any other female musicians with similar musical expressions. I'm also not an old-fashioned person who simply hates all nudity, and I'm certainly not conservative. I also acknowledge I'm writing from a very binary perspective, but I hope to highlight why female and male artists in the pop industry dress and market themselves so differently.

The increasing amounts of nudity endorsed by female artists are, contrary to popular belief, not actually conducive to the feminist movement.

With the body positivity movement came the idea that anyone can be sexy. No matter your weight, body shape, or appearance, anyone can be sexy. This was especially liberating for wom-

en. Women claimed they could be sexy for themselves, that their desire to look good and seek face and body modifications, such as plastic surgery, was for their own pleasure. However, when you live in a patriarchal, misogynistic society, such statements cannot be entirely true. Such actions taken by women are inevitably influenced by the pervasive male gaze, which causes women to internalize the patriarchy's toxic beauty standards.

Let's imagine a woman is looking at herself in the mirror and she wants to get lip fillers. It's not to please a guy, she thinks. She claims it's for her own self-confidence and her own pleasure. In reality, it's not. Where does the desire to get lip fillers come from? Why would getting lip fillers supposedly increase her own self-confidence? It's because the beauty standards she saw on social media or likewise,

perpetuated by male perspectives on what the ideal woman looks like, made her feel like her lips weren't large and plump enough. This beauty standard is what makes her feel better about herself when she gets lip fillers: she looks desirable and is in accordance with the patriarchy's beauty standards.

The same could be said about female pop stars who want to show nudity. In Billie Eilish's *Vogue* interview, in which she replaced her usually oversized shirt with revealing lingerie, she claimed, “My thing is that I can do whatever I want... It's all about what makes you feel good. If you want to get surgery, go get surgery. If you want to wear a dress that somebody thinks that you look too big wearing, f\*\*k it— if you feel like you look good, you look good.” I do partially agree with what she has to say. After all, it's my body, my choice. Who

cares what others think? But with the idea I previously posed, I believe it is important for women to reevaluate whether they want to do something because they're operating under the male gaze and it's what the beauty standards taught them, or if it is truly something they're doing for themselves.

The pop music industry says that the self-sexualization of women is okay, that it's okay if she is doing it herself and wants to, that that's what makes a girl independent and liberated. But if the biggest mission of feminism is to break down the patriarchy, I would like to ask: Did she really want this? Or did she want this because this is what the media taught her to want? Did she want this, or is she continuing to reinforce harmful stereotypes that continue to reduce women as objects of beauty and sex, a historically demeaning reputation for women but not

men?

I believe the true liberation and empowerment of women comes not from claiming empowerment when that method of “empowerment” is still playing by the rules of patriarchal beauty standards. When that method is continuing to reinforce harmful stereotypes that continue to reduce women as objects of beauty and sex, a historically demeaning reputation for women but not men. Instead, the method should come from trying to escape, bring down, and be truly free from such standards.

We are more than what we look like. When people say any girl can be sexy, I say girls don't have to be.

## Combating Doomism With Hopeful Climate News

By ARIANATHORNTON '24

In this age of hyper-awareness among our generation about the threat of climate change, thinking about the future of our world can become daunting, angering, and quickly turn pessimistic. This describes “climate doomism”—the idea that the world has already lost the battle against climate change and nothing can be done to reverse it on a global scale. But the truth is, there is as much valid scientific information about the reality of climate change as there is about the necessity of climate action. Nihilistic attitudes encourage climate inaction, which will get humanity nowhere; the only option is to stay hopeful and act. These feel-good climate action stories show us that positive change is more than possible.

1. The Inflation Reduction Act

After eighteen months of negotiation, Senate

Democrats succeeded in passing the Inflation Reduction Act in August, a monumental bill that will invest \$369 billion in climate solutions and environmental justice. The bill puts the United States on a path to 40 percent emissions reduction by 2030. Let's sum up some of its key components.

The bill will accelerate a clean energy transition that will lower energy costs across the country by:

- Investing \$60 billion in manufacturing solar panels and other clean energy technologies,
- Providing funding for low-income families to electrify their homes, and
- Making solar power more accessible and affordable to the average person.

The bill will transition the transportation sector away from fossil fuels by investing:

- \$3 billion for the U.S. Postal Service to electrify its fleet of more than 217,000

vehicles,

- \$1 billion for clean school and transit buses, garbage trucks, and other heavy-duty vehicles, prioritizing communities most affected by air pollution, and
  - \$3 billion for installing zero-emissions equipment and technology in portside communities disproportionately affected by toxic air pollution.
- In terms of environmental conservation, the bill provides:
- \$50 million to advance protections for mature and old-growth forests,
  - \$2.6 billion to protect and restore coastal communities and ecosystems, and
  - \$250 million to implement endangered species recovery plans.

The Inflation Reduction Act contains the largest single investment ever made for climate action and is a huge cause for celebration.

2. The Ozone Layer

In the 1980s, scientists warned that by 2050, humanity would completely destroy the ozone layer—a belt of gaseous molecules between the troposphere and stratosphere that protects every living organism from the sun's lethal ultraviolet rays (“Why You Don't Hear About the Ozone Layer Anymore,” *Vox*). Without the ozone layer, ecosystems would collapse, skin cancer rates would skyrocket, and life as we know it would cease to exist. But today, the ozone layer is healing. In an unprecedented act, the world came together to prevent an environmental catastrophe.

In 1985, scientists discovered a massive loss of ozone directly above Antarctica. Forty percent of the layer had dissipated, creating a hole that worsened every spring. Dozens of researchers traveled to Antarctica to take measurements and determine the cause behind this drastic loss of ozone.

The answer: chlorine from a man-made compound called chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs. In the 1980s, most of the world was using large amounts of CFCs in appliances ranging from refrigerators to air conditioners. This becomes a problem when CFCs escape into the stratosphere and the sun breaks them down into chlorine. Chlorine binds with ozone to form oxygen and chlorine monoxide, triggering a chemical chain reaction that destroys ozone molecules exponentially.

The growing threat of the disappearance of the ozone layer led to perhaps the fastest global action on climate. Scientists held press conferences to inform the public. The ozone hole began appearing in TV shows and movie scripts. Public awareness consequently pressured world leaders to act on the imminent problem.

Then, the 1987 Montreal Protocol officially recognized that “worldwide emissions of certain

substances can significantly deplete...the ozone layer in a manner that is likely to result in adverse effects on human health and the environment.” (“Why You Don't Hear About the Ozone Layer Anymore,” *Vox*.) It listed “Control Measures” to reduce ozone-depleting substances in a series of steps. Every single country eventually signed the protocol, making it the only universal treaty ever to be ratified and the most successful environmental agreement in human history. The ozone layer has since been recovering, and by 2065, it is expected to make a complete comeback.

It's not true that the public can't solve climate change, that scientists can't solve climate change, or that world leaders can't solve climate change. Because we have already solved one global environmental problem before. We have the power and the capability to do it again.

# Sports

## Girls' and Boys' Varsity Soccer Enjoy Preseason

By AVA HELBIG, ROHIT KANTAMNENI, LAUREN LEE, CHELSEA ZHAO

Big Red's girls' and boys' varsity soccer teams are off to a bang for the fall of the 2022-2023 school year. Players arrived a week prior to the start of school to begin a rigorous preseason.

Boys' varsity player upper Solu Ajene, described the training: "Pre-season was very high-intensity. I hadn't played much soccer over the summer, so I was quickly humbled by the fast-paced play and the stamina needed to keep up. My body quickly caught up to the daily training," he said. "There were many different drills, including possession games, five aside matches, and crossing."

The girls' team start-

ed their season off with a 1-1 tie against Nobles. Prep Ashley Ting scored a beautiful goal in her first match in an Exeter uniform to provide Big Red's lone score of the day while senior captain Bridgette Martin was outstanding in net.

For Martin, the game was thrilling: "The atmosphere on the field before was exciting! Our team was getting hyped up and ready for our first season game, we were all super happy and we were happy to see a lot of friends and family on the sidelines."

Head coach Alexa Caldwell added, "A tie against Nobles was significant—historically we have lost to Nobles, and while a win would have been awesome, to play such a competitive game against them was awesome. Especially since we have so many young players starting for us, and

an entirely new defense."

Martin also talked about some of the highlights and standouts of the season so far. "Ashley Ting's goal was a beautiful highlight of the game," she said. "[Senior] Sami Smith also had an amazing game putting lots of pressure on in the offensive end and challenged their keeper quite a bit."

The team focuses significantly on strategy in preparation for games. "We have been working on our communication all season. Also, with me and my co-captain Ryan Pate in the back, it's been a focus of ours to build from the back to create a successful and aggressive offensive line allowing us to shoot as we please," Martin said.

Caldwell applauded the team's efforts: "Overall, the team has been very focused in their preparation

for games. During warm up players are working to prepare themselves individually, while also making sure their teammates are getting excited and feeling confident," she said. "We had a session with a sports psychologist during pre-season to practice positive self-talk and having confidence."

The captains lead the team by example. "Our captains Ryan Pate and Bridgette Martin are doing a great job setting a tone for the season—they work hard and have fun, and at the end of the day, that is all I can ask from the players," Caldwell said.

The boys' team opened their season with a stunning win over Hoosac, 6-4. Varsity player upper Aaron Park talked about the scoring of the game: "During the game they scored first but we scored right after.

They led until the second half when we pulled a two goal lead by the hour."

The team's strategy, according to Park, was to focus on "crashing the box" since their size and height was an advantage, contributing to three of their goals.

Dedicated preparation contributed to the team's win. "The team usually gathers at Elm for a team meal, and then we walk out to the gym as a group. Whether home or away, the spirits are kept high with hype music and positive talk from teammates," Ajene said. "When we reach the field, we keep the pre-game warm-up intense and high-speed, so we aren't slacking in the actual game. We have a brief but energetic speech before the game starts, and by kickoff, the team is locked in and ready for a win."

Players praised the utilization of corner kicks during the game against Hoosac. "I distinctly remember our first two goals: back-post headers off a corner. It was a good day for setpieces as three of our goals came from corners," Ajene said.

"[Lower] Jaylen Bennet had a great run on the right wing to slot a goal in for us," Park added.

Both teams are optimistic for the season. "We are hoping to make it to the playoffs this season," Martin said. "We have a strong and young team coming in with a lot of energy."

Next up, the boys team faces off against Choate at home, while the girls are on the road against BB&N. Go Big Red!

## Varsity Field Hockey Bounces Back in Jamboree

By SELIM KIM, EMILEVINE, ROXPARK

On Sept. 10, the Academy's varsity field hockey team played a jamboree, a series of three scrimmages against Pingree, Brooks, and St. Paul's, to kick start their season.

Exeter unfortunately lost the first match against Pingree 0-2. In the second match, things seemed to be looking up, with Exeter and Brooks tied 1-1 for most of the game. However, at the very last minute, Brooks was able to pull ahead and score a goal, setting the score at 1-2. With two losses under Exeter's belt, the scrimmages were not looking the best for Exeter, but in the third and final game against St. Paul's, Exeter persevered, beating St. Paul's 2-0.

Head Coach Samantha Fahey shared her thoughts regarding the team's performance. "We were still coming off of a focused

and hard pre-season, so it was really nice to come together as a team. And we progressed as the day went on, which was a big positive," she said.

Fahey also shared some highlights from the jamboree: "We learned that different players can play different positions. We can move some people around to adjust, which is always good to have on a team, you know, different players working well together on attack and on defense. They started to feel really comfortable with each other."

Players on the team reflected on the course of the game as well. Lower Clare Stewart-Selvan thought the game was overall "very fun..." "It was our first real game. It was our first time playing together. So that was really fun, and very good for team bonding, because throughout pre-season, this is what we were preparing for. And we lost

the first one, almost had the second one... and then the last one we won, so it was perfect," she said.

Lower Natalia Ulbin shared similar thoughts. "It was our first game...but, I think as the season goes on, we'll definitely improve. It was also our first game together. We've been scrimmaging like half and half, so we haven't really played all together as a unit. But, I think as we go on, we'll learn how to use each other," she said.

Many players felt the main highlight from the jamboree was watching the team improve over time. "I think we definitely got better over the course of the games, and during the last game we definitely improved. We learned from the first and second games, we definitely stepped it up and applied what we learned before," upper Audrey Sim said.

Upper Freya Busser agreed, believing that the

games were a great opportunity for teamwork. "I think the growth from our first to last game was one of our highlights. The first one we weren't talking, and we weren't really using each other. We didn't feel like quite a team. Then in the last one, we were using each other, and we were using things that we worked on in pre-season," Busser said. "Everyone had a lot of fun, like the third game was actually fun."

This year, the team came a week early to campus on Sept. 1 for their pre-season training. "Pre-season was fun. We ate every meal together [and] we spent a lot of time together. A lot of bonding. We definitely got really close in those few, couple of days," Sim said.

However, the training definitely wasn't easy according to senior captain Eden Welch: "The conditioning, early mornings, and double practice days were certainly tough, but

we looked to each other and kept pushing the whole way through." Welch continued on to share one of her highlights from pre-season. "We scrimmaged under the lights at our only night practice. The scrimmage brought some of the best energy we have had the whole season, and it served to set the tone for the rest of the week and for Saturday."

Fahey added that "[The players] did a lot of work this summer, both with their training program pump from Coach Fisch, and from the captains and their leadership group. I try to let the team lead that for them to take ownership, but coming into pre-season, they were in a much better place, emotionally and physically. Connecting was important to them. So we came in really ready to go on that standpoint."

She also shared her hopes for the upcoming season: "We're really tak-

ing it one game at a time. Obviously, I have hopes to have a winning season or above 500 season. That'd be really good for this group because we're still pretty young and we're still young in terms of field hockey as well. I just want them to have fun. I want them to feel good about playing together and playing field hockey in general. So as long as we're stepping on and off the field, feeling good about what we're doing, that's what's important to me."

Many players echoed this sentiment. "I'm feeling pretty good. I think that we still have some things to work on and we also have some comfortability to focus on in regards to positioning...But, I'm very excited to see how we end up doing in the end. I think overall, despite our stats, I think that we're gonna have a lot of fun working together," Busser concluded.

## Athletics Spotlight: Downer Fitness Center

By ASHLEY JANE, ANNA KIM, CHENGYUE ZHANG

Downer Fitness Center, a 9,000 square foot athletic facility with open turf space, 12 Olympic platform-equipped power racks, and a large variety of cardio machines, has been bustling since the start of the 2022 fall term.

Students, faculty, and all members of the Exeter community, whether they are new to the gym or more experienced lifters, have put Downer to good use. "I love Downer. It was a super welcoming environment as a newbie lifter, and it has continued to meet my needs and help me grow, as I became more comfortable in the gym," upper Allison Whelan said.

For many community members, the accessibility of Downer is a huge appeal. "My favorite thing [about Downer] would be the fact that it's so accessible. [It only takes me] five minutes to get there," upper Colin Maloney said.

"I think a lot of people appreciate the time and effort that our coaches put into keeping the place running," upper Sam Pangan

added. "I love the convenience that Downer provides to be able to go and workout whenever I'm available and to see friends there too. It's great to have a place to train on campus that's open throughout the day."

Upper Coco Kim found Downer's open availability to be especially useful in the winter. "I like being active during the winter, but I don't really have an interest in winter sports," Kim said.

Many students also appreciate the wide selection, quality, and cleanliness of the equipment at Downer. "As a gym, Downer is one of the most amazing facilities I've ever seen," senior Ina Mason said. "It honestly makes me sad to go home and lift at my local gym, because Downer is just so much brighter and cleaner and newer, and it really has everything I could ever need."

"I don't think I would be near as content without Downer as a resource. I love the rack setup. It has everything anyone could dream of. Easy setup, versatile equipment, perfectly spaced. Truly my favorite place on campus," Whelan

added.

Senior Kodi Lopez commented on how the equipment in Downer can be adjusted to suit everyone's individual needs. "There's a lot of heights that you can adjust [the equipment] to compared to other gyms that might only have three or four settings," Lopez said. "There are also stations that use air resistance, [which] you can adjust any way you want. [Then you can] literally do any exercise you want with air resistance."

The strength and conditioning coaches are another valuable resource of the Downer Fitness Center. "My job is to be a strength and conditioning coach for the entire school," Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach Nicole Fowler said. "We're not just limited to athletes; we're available to work with anybody. I really enjoy and love when students ask me for some programming advice or for some technical advice."

Fowler explained the various ways to ask a strength and conditioning coach for gym or fitness help. "Students can come up to a coach during open

hours, or they can email a coach and ask for some advice," Fowler said. "Typically, if a student comes up to me for advice, I'll ask them what their goals are and what they want to get out of working out, and we'll set up a time to meet. Then, during that meeting, I'll have a program that's written up, and we'll go over the program together."

Senior and gym proctor Ciara McNamara shared her experience working with Fowler. "I felt comfortable [with Coach Fowler] since she's a woman in the Strength and Conditioning Office. She taught me all that I wanted to know about form... and how to [execute] all of these scary looking lifts," McNamara said.

"The coaches are incredibly helpful and incredibly supportive," McNamara continued. "They're here to push all of us, to make sure everything that we're doing is safe, and, obviously, to take care of this beautiful gym which they've passed down to us as gym proctors."

"Coach Fish and Coach Fowler have helped me with so many things. They've helped me learn

the form on lifts. They've helped me learn how to build workouts for myself, and they've helped show me new types of workouts to reach my goals," Mason said.

Gym proctors are also available for gym advice for those who may be more comfortable interacting with other students. "I get to teach some of the underclassmen. I told some of the preps in my dorm about Downer, and that I can help them with form," McNamara said. "[As a gym proctor], I can help spot people and play music. I think there's some really good vibes whenever I'm in Downer for sure."

McNamara also urged more underclassmen to utilize Downer Fitness Center. "I think that there is an interesting culture of only upperclassmen being here. I would love to see more underclassmen learn the form and just how to get in here," McNamara said.

Despite some restricted hours for team sports or on weekends, many students have found Downer extremely helpful in relieving the academic pressure of Exeter. "[Lifting] is a grind for sure, but your mind is

off of Exeter. You're not thinking about your five homework assignments or whatever [it is]; you're just thinking about lifting weights and [maintaining] good form," Maloney said. "You have this feeling of yourself getting stronger and just being in the present."

"I feel like lifting really helps me get through the week, because even though at the moment, it feels like I would just be losing time, it helps me relieve stress, especially if you're listening to music with your friends and lifting heavy," upper Sophia Lee added.

For all students regardless of athlete status or gym experience, Fowler has an important reminder. "I want students to know that Downer is an open space. We want it to be inclusive of everybody so even if you haven't had experience working out or the gym seems intimidating, please try it out," Fowler encouraged. "There are great resources in Downer to open your eyes to new experiences and set you up for success later on in life."

# Humor

## To the Lovely Line Cutters

By JOONYOUNG HEO '25

Last week I heard in a passing conversation that *The Exonian* is all news and no gratitude. I stayed up until the wee hours of the night, tossing and turning in bed, and I came to the wretched conclusion that they were right. We have News, Life, Op-Ed, Sports, Humor—but no Gratitude. So I thought I would take some space in this issue to express some gratitude for a truly underappreciated group of people on campus—the charming folks who cut the food lines.

Ever since I ate my first meal at the Academy, I have idolized those among us who cut the lines. They have such bravado, such agency,

such confidence, such a willingness to step forward and do something for their own betterment. This is precisely the spirit which Exeter strives to instill in youth from every quarter: the competence to fight for what we believe in, the conviction to claim what's rightfully ours. Of course the line cutters deserve their food before everyone else in line. Of course their right to eat far exceeds the rights of all others. Of course they don't have to wait—the very thought of it makes me laugh. Waiting is a task best suited for the losers who have even an ounce of common decency, or a shard of anything that resembles a moral compass. And I so admire these line cutters, because they have

engraved into their hearts these universal truths and they are willing to fight for them.

I have heard disturbing rumors that the administration discourages such line cutting. This is insane. I implore you, you brave warriors who labor under the weight of condemnation from your peers and instructors, never to stop. Cut the lines as long as there are lines to cut. The universe revolves around you. You are the center of this Earth, and everyone else is inconsequential. You are the most beautiful, the most fascinating, the most indispensable beings to exist. Everything is about you. You come first every time. It's always about

you, your needs, your most innate desires. If you're hungry, eat. I say this again—you deserve to eat first. You are the lions, fierce and feared, for whom the dirty scavengers—the likes of vultures and coyotes—must make way. Only after you have eaten can these pathetic creatures pick at your scraps. Stand firm, I say, and hold your ground. Cut the lines like there is no tomorrow and you will go far in this life.

I will say a word about those who refuse to cut the lines and choose instead to wait. These people are fools. They care about the rules, they have even the slightest concern for morals and ethics, they are considerate of their peers,

they are unshakable in their humanity—in short, they are a menace to this institution. They are a pillar of the old world, a long-forgotten era in which people were good at heart and kind in spirit. If they had an iota of sense, they would follow the example displayed by their line-cutting superiors. It is never too late to change oneself. Break free and stride forth, and cut every line you please.

I will conclude this letter with a word for the line-cutting upperclassmen. If you identify as an upper or a senior, and if it is a habit of yours to cut the food lines, I would like to express my deepest gratitude. You set an outstanding example for the lowerclassmen, and in

so doing, you perpetuate a cycle of line cutting that is passed from year to year. Truly, I thank you. You teach the youth to take action, to fight for what they believe in. Never stop, never relent. The Academy needs you more than you realize.

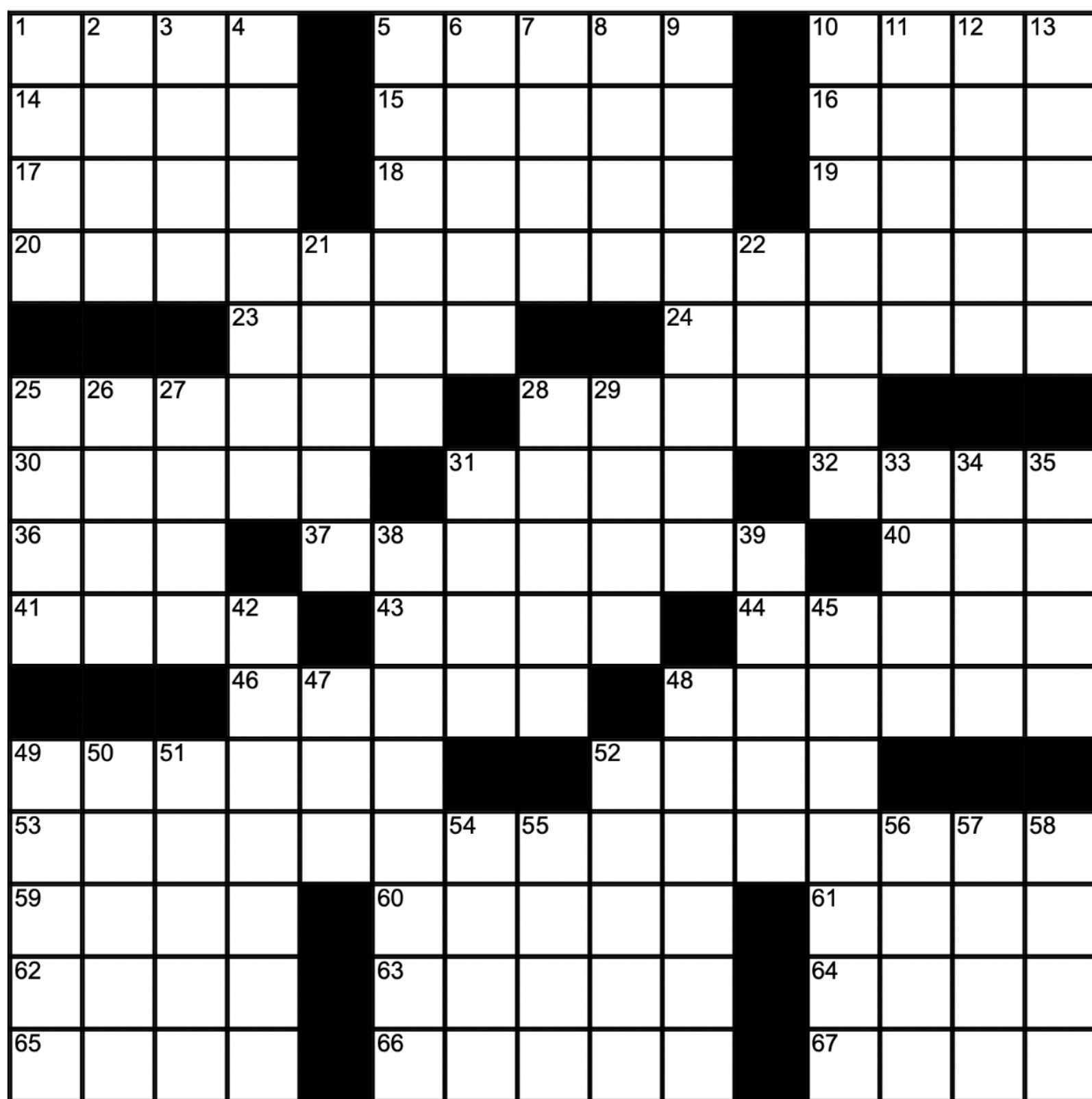
So go forth, my heroes, go forth and take the world by storm, for it is yours and yours only. Cut the lines—oh, please do cut the lines—and know from this day forward that you have my most undying gratitude.

Most sincerely yours,

Your fervent admirer

## The Crossword Corner

By Gbemiga Salu '23



**ACROSS**

- 1 '22 Peele picture
- 5 Wait at tables
- 10 Heart test, for short
- 14 Tavern orders
- 15 Other name for The Academy, plural
- 16 Lions, astrologically
- 17 Big Bad Wolf's three little friends
- 18 "L + ..." in a comments section
- 19 First we go to the moon, then it's...
- 20 Bands for the betrothed
- 23 Hankerings, informally
- 24 Comes as a result

- 25 Montana's capital
- 28 Jeweler's unit
- 30 Omit in pronunciation
- 31 Java's neighbor
- 32 "Victory is mine!"
- 36 Current unit
- 37 '73 Pacino picture
- 40 Poetic praise
- 41 Model
- 43 Chuck or toss, in Gen Z-speak
- 44 Transportation charges
- 46 Requires
- 48 The one catch
- 49 2018 Best Rap Album Grammy winner

- 52 Follows skin, hair, or self
- 53 Things you probably won't tell anyone
- 59 Horned mammal without the "H"
- 60 Bangkok residents
- 61 A cow might let out...
- 62 You get them signed before Boston
- 63 Temporary tattoo medium
- 64 Has to
- 65 Throwing up, you might spill them
- 66 Mythical goat-man
- 67 Andy Horrigan is Pres. of it

**DOWN**

- 1 Back of the neck
- 2 Actor Ken or Lena
- 3 Simon of Shaun of the Dead
- 4 Senior Meditated
- 5 Tennis player with 23 grand slams
- 6 Tests
- 7 Pharmacy ...-Aid
- 8 Not the artery
- 9 Obscure
- 10 Earth's second largest active volcano
- 11 John Wick Reeves
- 12 Small canyon
- 13 Sssnake'ss Sssound
- 21 Hereditary traits

- 22 Single-strand molecule
- 25 Pile
- 26 Sesame Street star
- 27 Mouth pieces
- 28 Verde, Cod, Town
- 29 On fire
- 31 Raised
- 33 Put on
- 34 Thought
- 35 Bird's home
- 38 Lab optic washers
- 39 Saint Joan...
- 42 Bridge partBasic
- 45 Basic
- 47 Muslim holiday
- 48 Roman salad
- 49 Old storage medium

- 50 The vowels, and sometimes "Y"
- 51 Pays monthly
- 52 Cop show set in The Big Apple
- 54 Greek mother goddess
- 55 Philosopher Immanuel
- 56 Aussie birds
- 57 Lil' kids
- 58 Mid

# Where are the Rate Liner Packages?

By NHAN PHAN '24

When Rate Liner arrived on campus at the end of the last school year, equipped with their cardboard boxes, bubble wrap, and packing tape, flocks of Exonians ran to the EPAC quad to lay claim to the supplies like how participants in the Hunger Games raced to retrieve a weapon. After paying a \$75 base fee (ouch!) for pickup and delivery, they left Exeter for the summer knowing that their couch, fans, printers, pillows, and mattress toppers were in good care.

Upon their arrival back on campus this September, Exonians were appalled when they painfully found out that their boxes had gone missing. The boxes that they paid \$5 each for, the furniture that they paid over \$30 for, and the electronics that they probably paid over \$20 for are all missing. However, fear not! These are some locations your boxes have potentially ended up at:

1. Exeter, England  
Exeter, an ancient city on the River Exe in southwest England, is most famous for its Normal Cathedral. The city's history dates back to pre-Roman times. You can enjoy a delicious plate of fish and chips at Hooks on South

Street, shop your dorm-room essentials at Tesco Express, and purchase the newest apparel at H&M on High Street. It is most likely that your boxes of mattress toppers and shower sandals are shipped to 20 Main Road, Pinhoe, Exeter, England. One lucky family will receive a 4-year supply of Gatorade Cool Blue and Maruchan Chicken Noodle Soup Ramen!

2. Somewhere in the middle of the Sahara Desert

Alex the Geologist returned to New Hampshire in June to work a part-time job at the Rate Liner processing center to fund his future trips. He might have stolen your box filled with sports shoes, binoculars, math textbooks, and protractors. Maybe that might help him find the gas station a bit more quickly the next time he ever craves ice-cold Pepsi.

3. Library Archives  
A group of HIS600 students is doing a project which catalogs the lifestyles of Exonians in the age of COVID-19. Congratulations! Your Rate Liner box has been chosen to be featured in the Library archives as an artifact of student life. 50 years from now, the pairs of Nike socks you left in the laundry room but only

remembered to pick up on the last day of school, your surge protectors that are half broken but you refuse to throw away, or your English books that you left in your Rate Liner box because of "posterity purposes" will become more valuable.

4. Phnom Penh, Cambodia

The first city that randomcity.net generated.

5. Heathrow Airport

Everything eventually made its way to Heathrow Airport this summer. Unfortunately, your box was caught up in this summer's travel jam. Your box went on vacation around Europe as it navigated one Lufthansa flight after another. It ultimately ended up in the baggage processing system at Heathrow Airport in London. You will most likely never see your box again. Sorry about that...

6. Exeter, NH

Try looking in your dorm again. Maybe someone else took it. Maybe it's right down in the lobby of your dorm. Maybe it was shipped to the wrong dorm. Maybe it's somewhere in the middle of Elm. Try looking for it again on campus, with any luck, you might just find it.

# Why You Should Join New Hall

By HANNAH PARK '24 and CHELSEA ZHAO '24

1. No PREPS: New Hall's dorm chant is "so fresh," but it really means "so fresh, no fresh(man)"

2. Automatic Sinks: Start your day with a challenge by battling the sink in New Hall! When you have face wash soap bubbles in your eyes, the sinks like to mess with you and will suddenly turn off. Harkness discussions will be a breeze compared to your attempt at self-care every morning.

3. Great Location: Only a 15-minute walk to your classes, sports, and food! Bonus is when you're walking through the foot-tall snow at 6 a.m. for breakfast: you'll definitely get your steps in!

4. Day Student "Lounge":

A foot-by-foot room in the basement with no windows. It's for day students to relax and sleep in, and it's similar to a prison! But don't worry, we're redecorating with string lights.

5. Aroma: Surrounded by the heavenly aroma of "new paint," you'll be gifted with a headache every time you walk through the hallways. Perfect for 1 a.m. study sessions and giving you energy for 8 a.m. classes.

6. Immobile Windows: If you want to air out the paint smells or let in the breeze, you will get a good workout by climbing to the top of your desk, pushing the window open, and breaking your arm because you simply can't. If you use your Exeter wisdom to somehow force it open, you now have the bonus work of closing it! To

do so, just climb back up, stand on the window ledge, and then jump with your entire body weight while pushing it down. But seriously, if you want to thrive in New Hampshire, you should freeze during the night with an open window like a true northerner. (I know this is a humor article, but I'm not joking. I do this every day. Doc. Sam please help.)

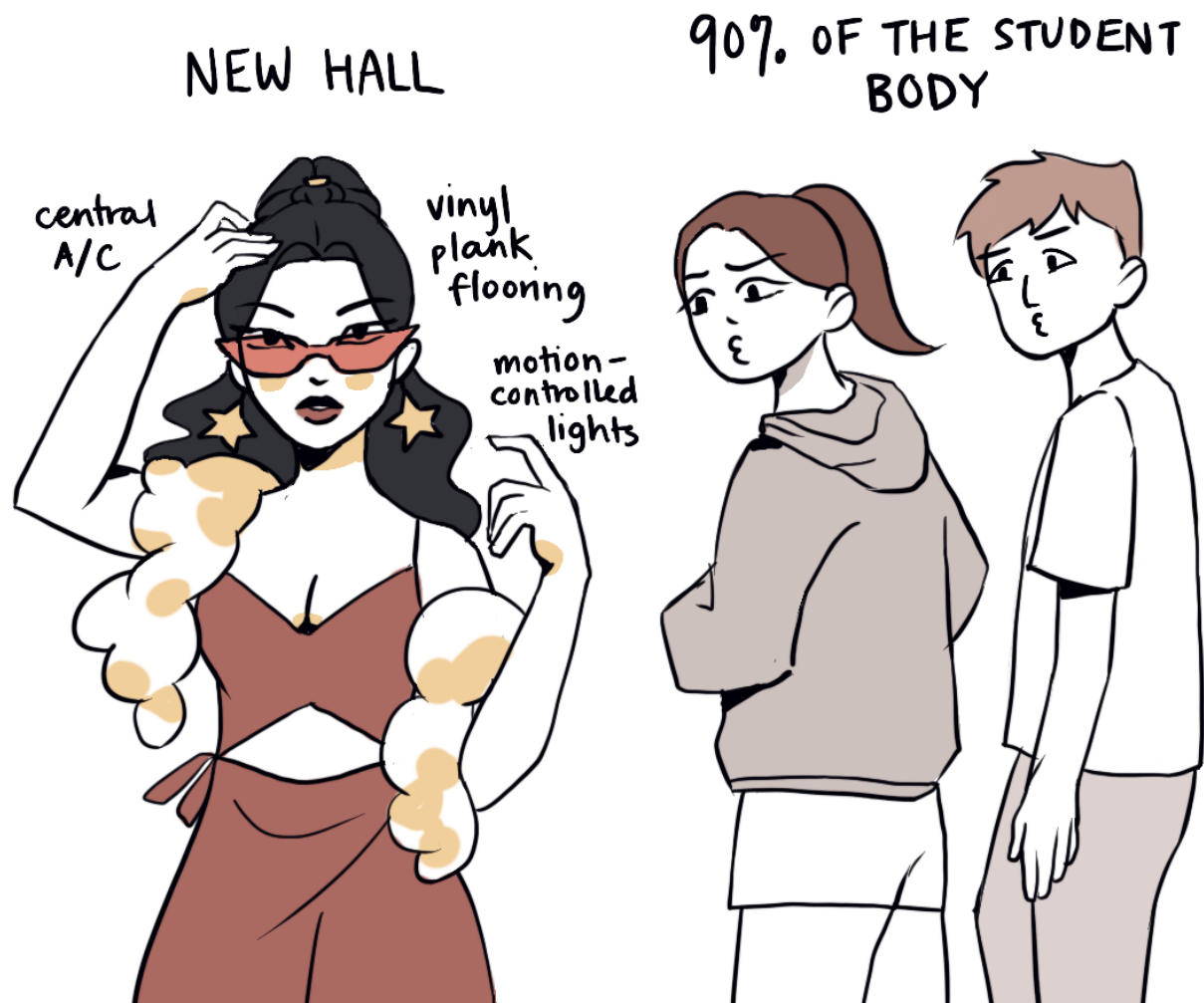
7. Health Classes: If you thought combining two dorms to share one building is crowded, just wait—it gets even better! With the addition of health classrooms, you're going to love sharing your beloved walls with students discussing their wellbeing at 8 a.m.! Extra education!

8. Dorm Spirit: Lamont vs. Merrill. That's it.



# Cartoon of the Fortnight: New Hall

By ARIANA THORNTON '24



# 10 Essential Tips to Surviving Phillips Exeter Academy

By ANVI BHATE '24 and SOPHIEMA '24

1. Always wear your lion card on a lanyard around your neck (bonus if your key is on the lanyard too). It will make you look organized, and your teachers and fellow peers will really appreciate you!

2. Leave your southside dorm two minutes before 8 a.m. and sprint to class as fast as possible to show your

dedication to academic excellence. You will be widely admired for your determination and speed.

3. Exeter can get busy! Make sure to run up and down the hallways and stairwells in your dorm after check-in to get your daily cardio in. Hearing people run around will be great motivation to upperclassmen trying to get work done!

4. Cut the line every time you eat at D-Hall. You will receive extensive applause and praise from

all the students and faculty around you.

5. Always say you're a "new" prep. Otherwise, people assume you're a returning prep and things will get confusing.

6. It's the grill, not "grill." Anyone who says otherwise is trying to trick you. Don't listen to them!

7. Join the prep posse, and always walk around in a mob so everyone knows it.

8. Definitely sit on

the first floor during assembly. In the front too. And make sure to get up before they say "senior class."

9. Walk through the arches at least once a day. It'll boost your chances of graduating to 110 percent!

10. Join a cult on campus to get the full experience! Options include: the boys' cross country team, Soule Hall, the day student cult, and more if you know where to look (wink wink).

# 10 Clubs to Join

By CATHERINE WU '24 and ALAYSHA ZHANG '24

1. *The Exonian*: The only club you'll ever need.

2. D-hall Food Review Club: For when the grilled chicken breast seems like the best option

3. Citrus Peach Cranberry juice Debate Club: Are you team citrus peach or team cranberry or team all-4-juice-concoction?

4. Science Building Cry in the Bathroom Club: after bombing your bio test or skipping half the questions on your physics quiz, open A to G format Monday through Fridays.

5. Downer 6 a.m. Club: BFFR.

6. Draw on Chalkboards in the Music Building Club: Ever wonder who does the little doodles or writes in cursive or does math problems characters in random languages? Join to find out.

7. Pet the Webster Cat Club (?): Not a want, a need.

8. Department/Faculty Meeting at Grill Club: Club requirement = be a Southside boarder ("My dorm is too far away.")

9. Left-side-of-Elm Club: AKA people watchers.

10. A person who are in MUN-MockTrial-Exonian-Debate Club: The only valid Big-4 club is *The Exonian*.